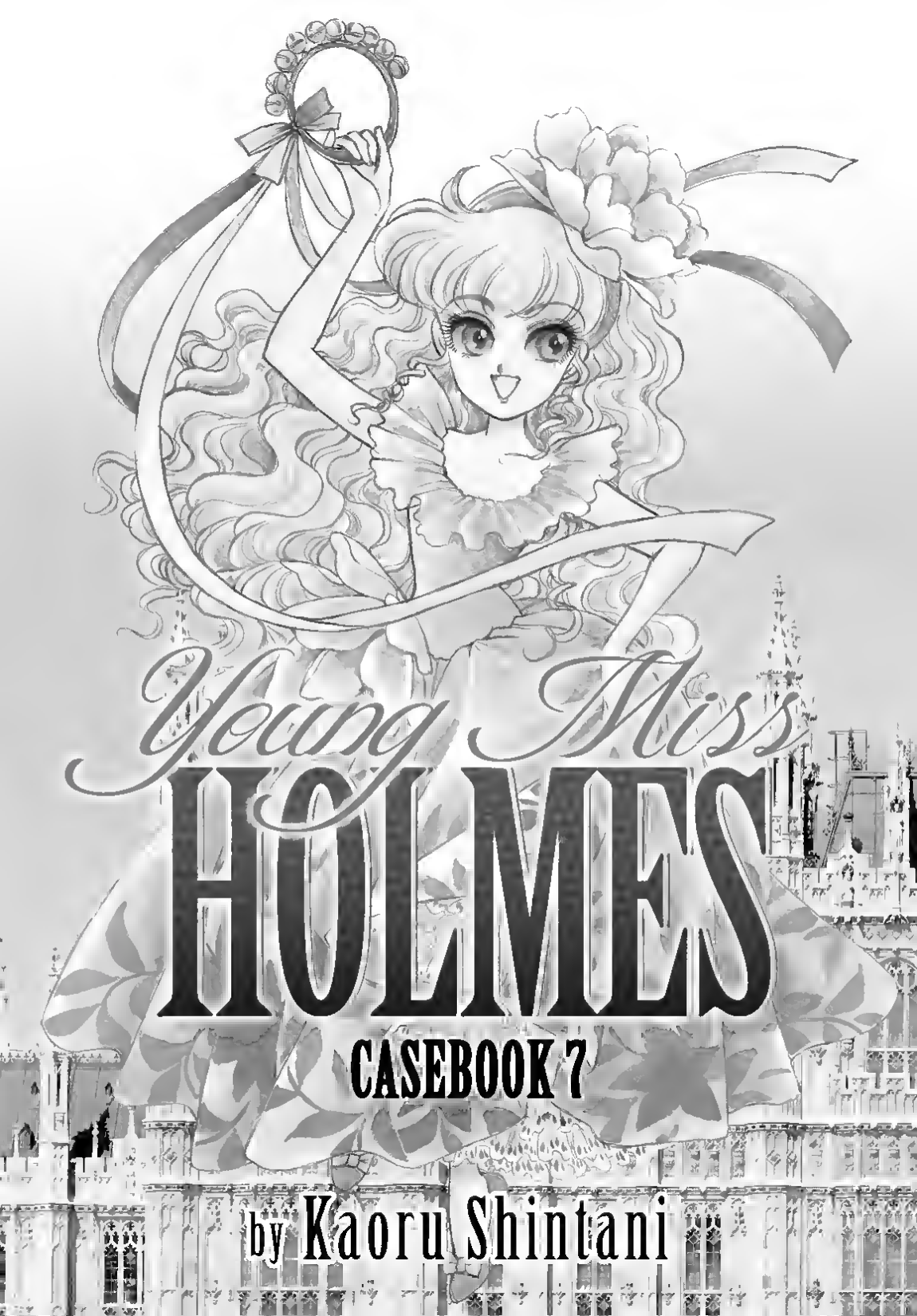
7
Young Miss
HOLMES
Kaoru Shintani


Young Miss
HOLMES
CASEBOOK 7
by Kaoru Shintani

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YOUNG MISS HOLMES CASEBOOK 7
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READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from *right to left*, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!

The Adventure of The Giant Rat of Sumatra (1)

Young Miss
HOLMES

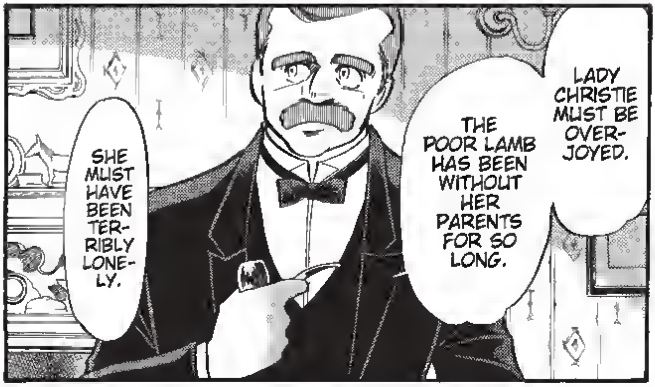
LOOK, EVERYONE! THEY SENT A NEW PHOTO-GRAPH OF HIM!!
BABY BROTHER? I THOUGHT LADY CHRISTIE WAS AN ONLY CHILD.
YOUNG MASTER ALEX WAS BORN SHORTLY AFTER THE HOPES ARRIVED IN INDIA.
HE WILL BE TURNING FIVE THIS YEAR.
OH MY! WHAT A DARLING LITTLE PET!
YES, HE DOES LOOK PRE-CIOUS ...
OUR ALEXANDER HOPE II.
HE HAS GROWN TREMEN-DOUSLY SINCE THE LAST PHOTO-GRAPH WE RECEIVED.
THEY SHOULD BE IN LONDON BY THIS TIME NEXT MONTH.
OOH, I CAN HARD-LY WAIT!

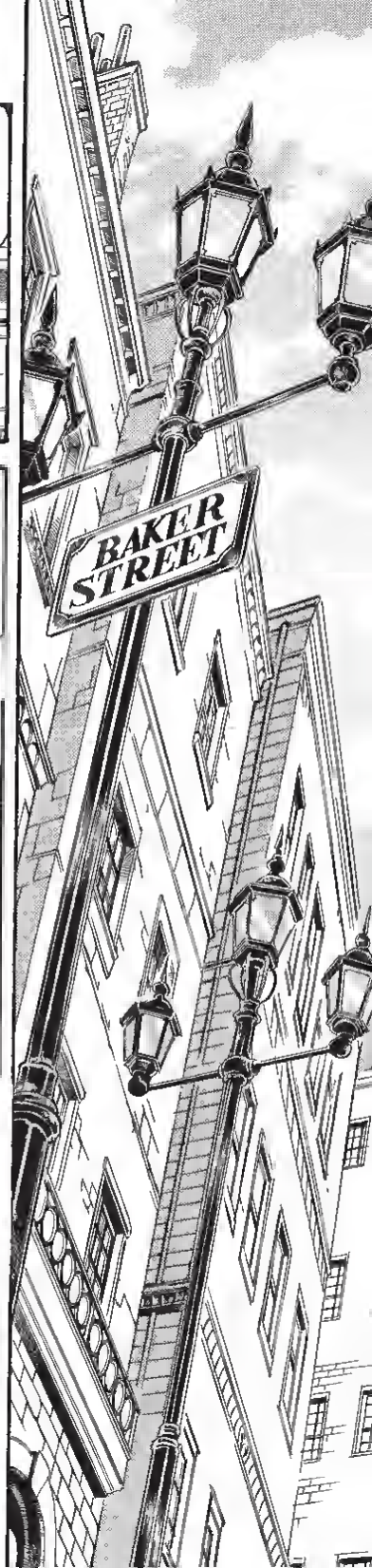
?
AIN'T YOU HAPPY, TOO?
.....
IT'S BEEN A FAIR BIT O' TIME SINCE WE LAST SEEN THE MISS THIS HAPPY.
YES.
THAT IS NOT A LOT OF TIME.
THEY SHALL BE HERE IN ONE MONTH.
PRECISELY.
WE MUST ENACT A *DRASTIC* REFORM OF HER DAILY HABITS.

HRM.
IT APPEARS MY BROTHER-IN-LAW IS RETURNING FROM INDIA.

YES. FIVE YEARS, EH? QUITE THE LONG EXILE HE ENDURED.
AN EXILE...? HOLMES!

WHAT? LORD HOPE WILL BE BACK?


LADY CHRISTIE MUST BE OVER-JOYED.
THE POOR LAMB HAS BEEN WITHOUT HER PARENTS FOR SO LONG.
SHE MUST HAVE BEEN TER-RIBLY LONE-LY.


BAKER STREET

NONE OF THOSE ARE THE SAME.
AND THE CASES HAVE COME PRACTICALLY WITHOUT PAUSE TO KEEP HER ENTERTAINED.
SHE HAS HER STAFF FOR COMPANIONSHIP, AS WELL AS OURSELVES.
I HARDLY THINK SO.
.....
YOU KNOW, I FANCY THAT WE WILL BE THE ONES FINDING OURSELVES A BIT LONELY.
I IMAGINE WITH THEM HOME, MISS CHRISTIE WILL FIND LESS REASON TO VISIT THE OFFICE.
SHE WILL HAVE HER ENTIRE FAMILY AROUND HER.
HMPH. GOOD. I WILL FINALLY BE ABLE TO CONCENTRATE.
MASTER HOLMES.
INSPECTOR GREGSON FROM SCOTLAND YARD HAS ARRIVED.

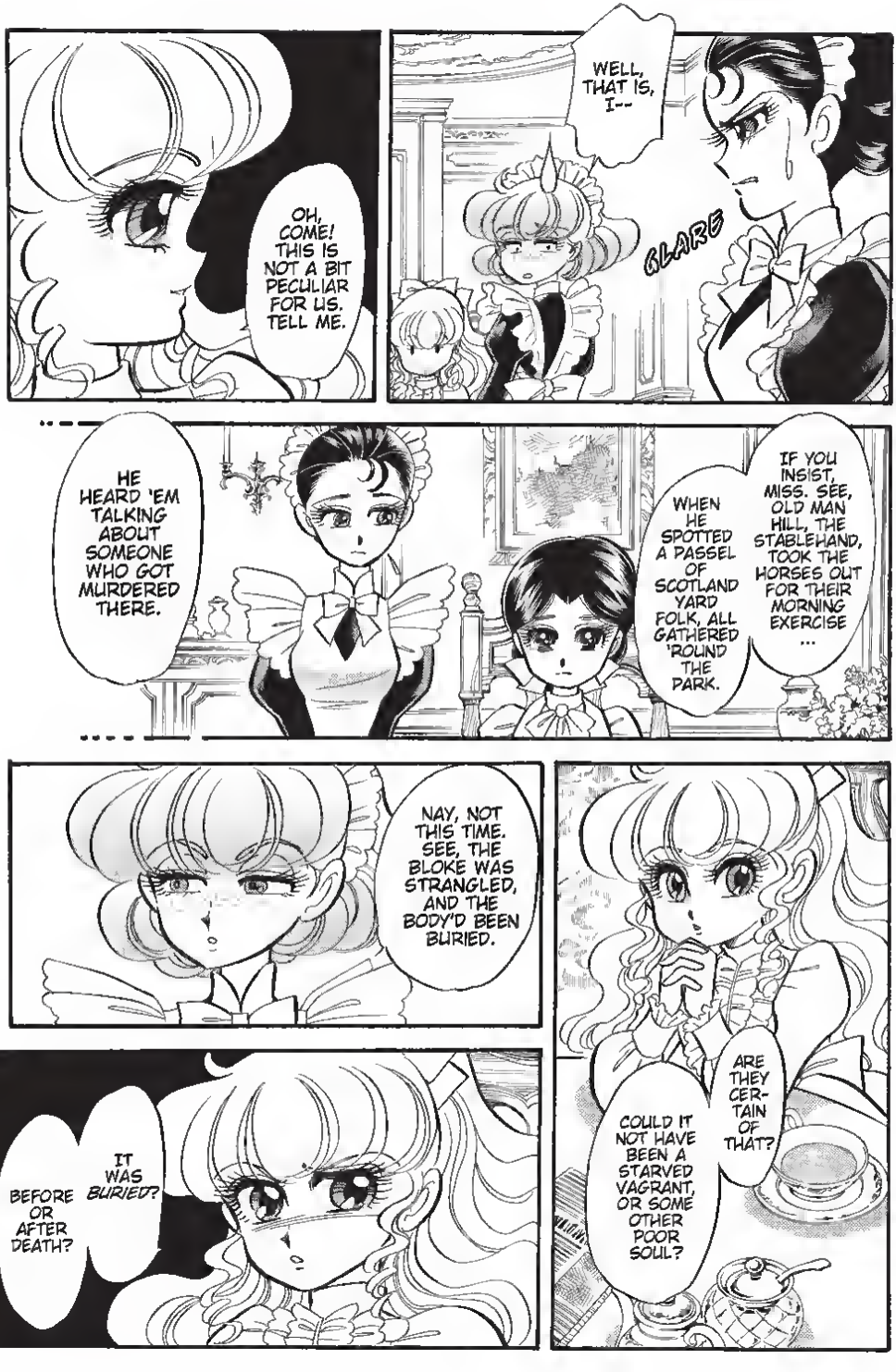
I WASN'T AWARE SCOTLAND YARD COULD HAVE GOOD MORNINGS, INSPECTOR.
MR. HOLMES. I'D WISH YOU A GOOD MORNING, BUT TODAY IS SHAPING UP TO BE ANYTHING BUT THAT.
I'LL GET RIGHT TO THE POINT.
WE'VE HAD A CABLE. IT SEEMS THE GIANT RAT OF SUMATRA WILL BE LANDING IN LONDON.
WHAT WAS THE ORIGIN OF THIS CABLE?
THE GIANT RAT OF SUMATRA?!

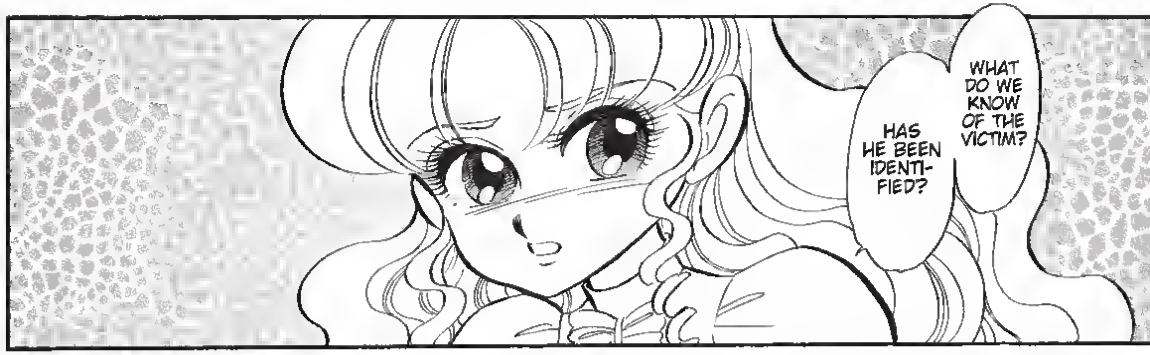
IT SEEMS JAVA AND SUMATRA ARE EXPERIENCING INCREASINGLY GREAT DEPREDATIONS BY VERMIN.
IT CAME FROM A TRADING COMPANY BASED IN INDIA.
SO THIS RAT, FROM HALF A WORLD AWAY, IS COMING *HERE*?
TO LON-DON?
AH, YES. I RECALL READING A RECENT ARTICLE IN THE NEWSPAPER ABOUT THAT.
YES, BY SHIP.
ENGLAND HAS BEEN IMPORTING AN INCREASING AMOUNT OF LUMBER FROM THE ORIENT.
RATS HIDE IN THE LUM-BER.
THEY ARE CARRIED ONTO THE SHIP, AND BREED THERE. AND THEN THE SHIP SAILS HERE, CARRYING THE RATS OVER WITH THEM.
BUT THE VERMIN THEM-SELVES ARE JUST A MINOR CONCERN.
WE ARE FAR MORE WORRIED ABOUT THE DISEASES THEY MAY BE CARRYING.
221b

WELL, LARGE PORTS LIKE LONDON AND LIVERPOOL ALREADY CONDUCT CAREFUL INSPECTIONS OF ALL CARGO BEFORE IT IS UNLOADED.
BUT UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THERE *MUST* BE A SECONDARY INSPECTION. STOP THE SHIPS OUT IN THE HARBOR, AND HAVE A DOCTOR EXAMINE THE CREW FOR ANY SIGNS OF DISEASE.
WE ARE AN ISLAND NATION, AFTER ALL.
IF WE MERELY PAY ATTENTION TO ALL SHIPS COMING AND GOING BEFORE THEY DROP ANCHOR AT OUR PORTS, WE CAN MAINTAIN CONTROL QUITE EFFECTIVELY.
WE MUSTN'T ALLOW *ANY* PESTILENCE, FROM INDIA OR ELSEWHERE, TO GET LOOSE IN LONDON, YOU KNOW. IT WOULD BE A DISASTER.
.....
INSPECTOR GREGSON, I AM GRATIFIED THAT YOU CAME TO ME FOR ADVICE ON THIS MATTER.
IT IS FLATTERING THAT YOU REMEMBERED I WAS A FIELD SURGEON DURING THE BOER WAR.

PER-HAPS.
HRM? HOLMES, IS SOME-THING THE MATTER?
THAT WAS QUITE THE EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCE, LET ME TELL YOU. SUCH DISEASES... FRIGHTFUL THINGS THAT WERE NEVER TAUGHT IN MY NICE, TIDY MEDICAL SCHOOL, HERE IN LONDON.
WHAT TROU-BLES ME IS THE CABLE.
THE ADVICE YOU GAVE TO HIM IS EQUALLY LOGICAL AND WISE.
IT IS QUITE OBVIOUS WHY THE INSPECTOR CHOSE TO VISIT US TODAY, AND HE WAS WISE IN DOING SO.
WHY NOT SIMPLY SAY, "SUMATRAN RATS"?
WHY REFER TO IT AS "THE GIANT RAT OF SUMATRA"?
?
HM?

PEEP
PEEP
PEEP
CHIRP
CHIRP
WHAT A SPLENDID MORNING! THE BIRDS ARE SINGING, AND THE WEATHER IS LOVELY.
PEEP
PEEP
PEEP
AYE. SEEMS THERE WAS A MURDER IN KENSINGTON.
OH? HAVE YOU HEARD SOMETHING?
BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE THERE'S TROUBLE BREWIN' IN THE WIDER WORLD.
WELL, WE'VE GOT IT NICE ENOUGH, MISS.
THE NEWSPAPER MENTIONS NOTHING OF ANY MURDER...
YIPE!
NORA! THAT IS NOT AN APPROPRIATE TOPIC FOR THE BREAKFAST TABLE.


OH, COME! THIS IS NOT A BIT PECULIAR FOR US. TELL ME.
WELL, THAT IS, I--
GLARE
HE HEARD 'EM TALKING ABOUT SOMEONE WHO GOT MURDERED THERE.
WHEN HE SPOTTED A PASSEL OF SCOTLAND YARD FOLK, ALL GATHERED 'ROUND THE PARK.
IF YOU INSIST, MISS. SEE, OLD MAN HILL, THE STABLEHAND, TOOK THE HORSES OUT FOR THEIR MORNING EXERCISE ...
NAY, NOT THIS TIME. SEE, THE BLOKE WAS STRANGLED, AND THE BODY'D BEEN BURIED.
ARE THEY CERTAIN OF THAT?
COULD IT NOT HAVE BEEN A STARVED VAGRANT, OR SOME OTHER POOR SOUL?
IT WAS *BURIED*?
BEFORE OR AFTER DEATH?

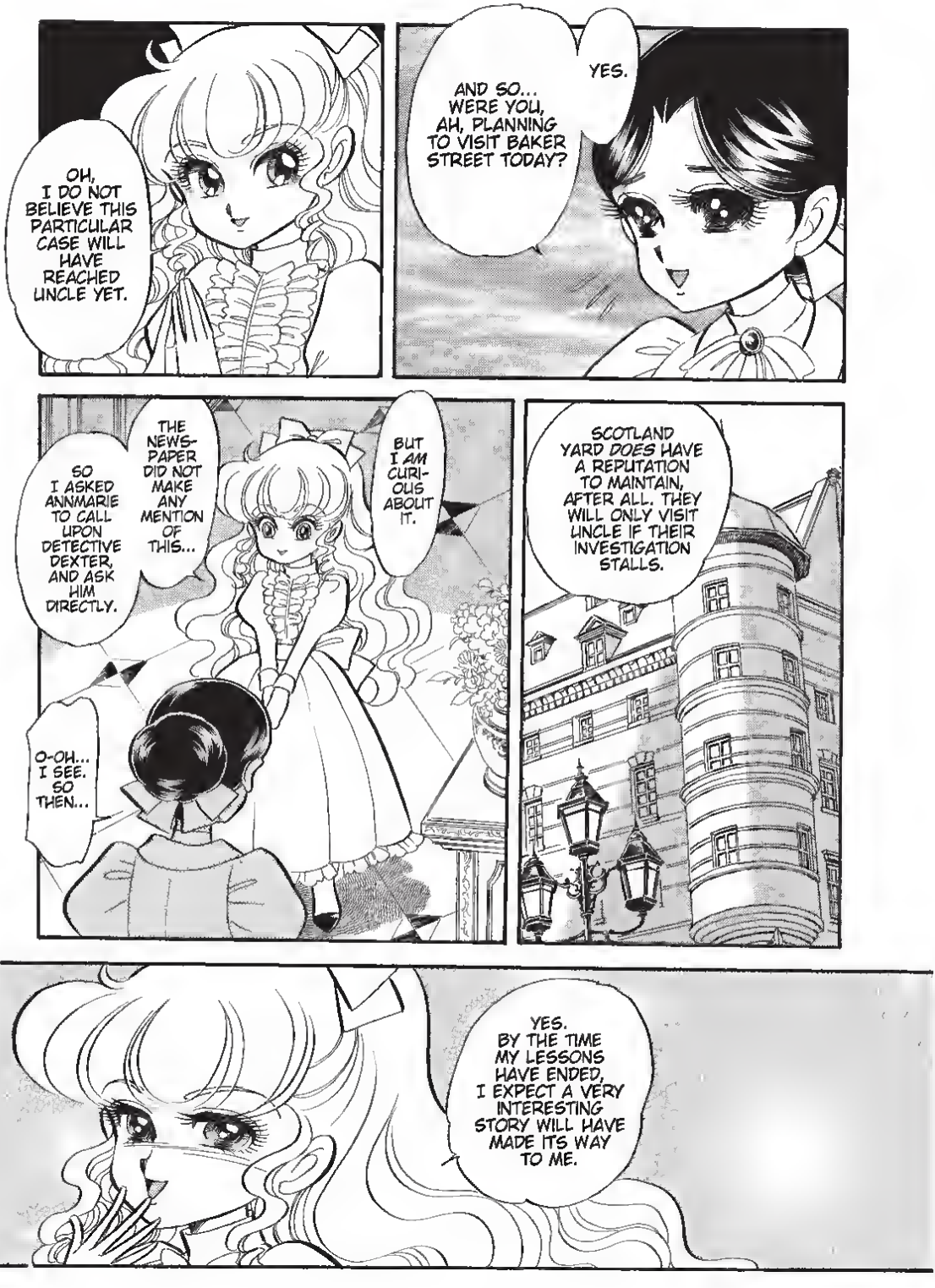

WHAT DO WE KNOW OF THE VICTIM?
HAS HE BEEN IDENTI-FIED?

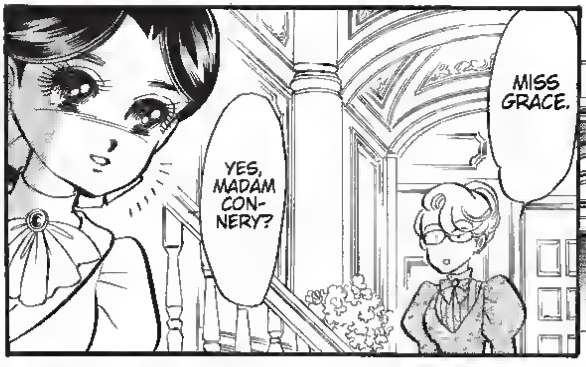
CAN'T RIGHTLY SAY, I'M AFRAID.
HILL HEARD IT WAS A MAN.

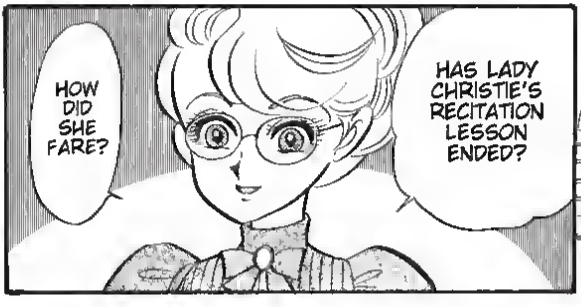
ERM, MY LADY ...
YOU DO RECALL THAT YOU HAVE LESSONS IN POETRY RECITATION THIS AFTER-NOON, DO YOU NOT?
YES. A TUTOR WILL BE COMING, I BELIEVE.

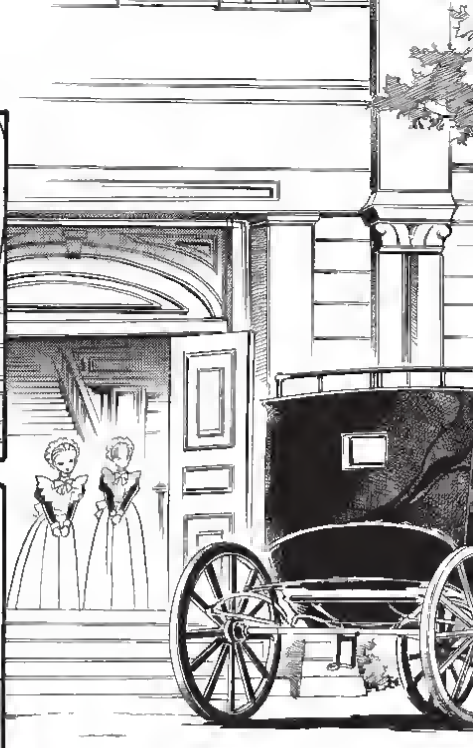
YES, MISS GRACE?

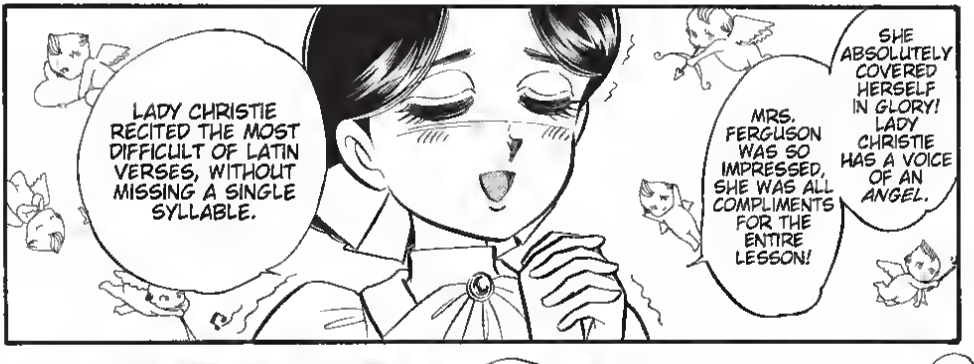
MY LADY!
RSTL
RSTL

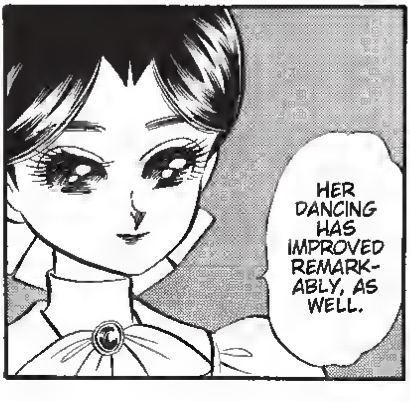

OH, I DO NOT BELIEVE THIS PARTICULAR CASE WILL HAVE REACHED UNCLE YET.
AND SO... WERE YOU, AH, PLANNING TO VISIT BAKER STREET TODAY?
YES.
SO I ASKED ANNMARIE TO CALL UPON DETECTIVE DEXTER, AND ASK HIM DIRECTLY.
THE NEWS-PAPER DID NOT MAKE ANY MENTION OF THIS...
BUT I AM CURI-OUS ABOUT IT.
SCOTLAND YARD DOES HAVE A REPUTATION TO MAINTAIN, AFTER ALL. THEY WILL ONLY VISIT UNCLE IF THEIR INVESTIGATION STALLS.
O-OH... I SEE. SO THEN...
YES. BY THE TIME MY LESSONS HAVE ENDED, I EXPECT A VERY INTERESTING STORY WILL HAVE MADE ITS WAY TO ME.

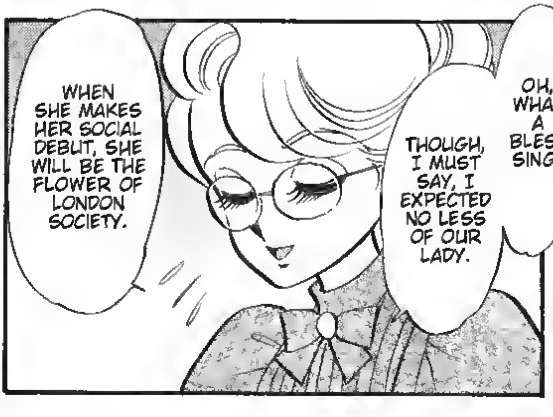

MISS GRACE.
YES, MADAM CONNERY?

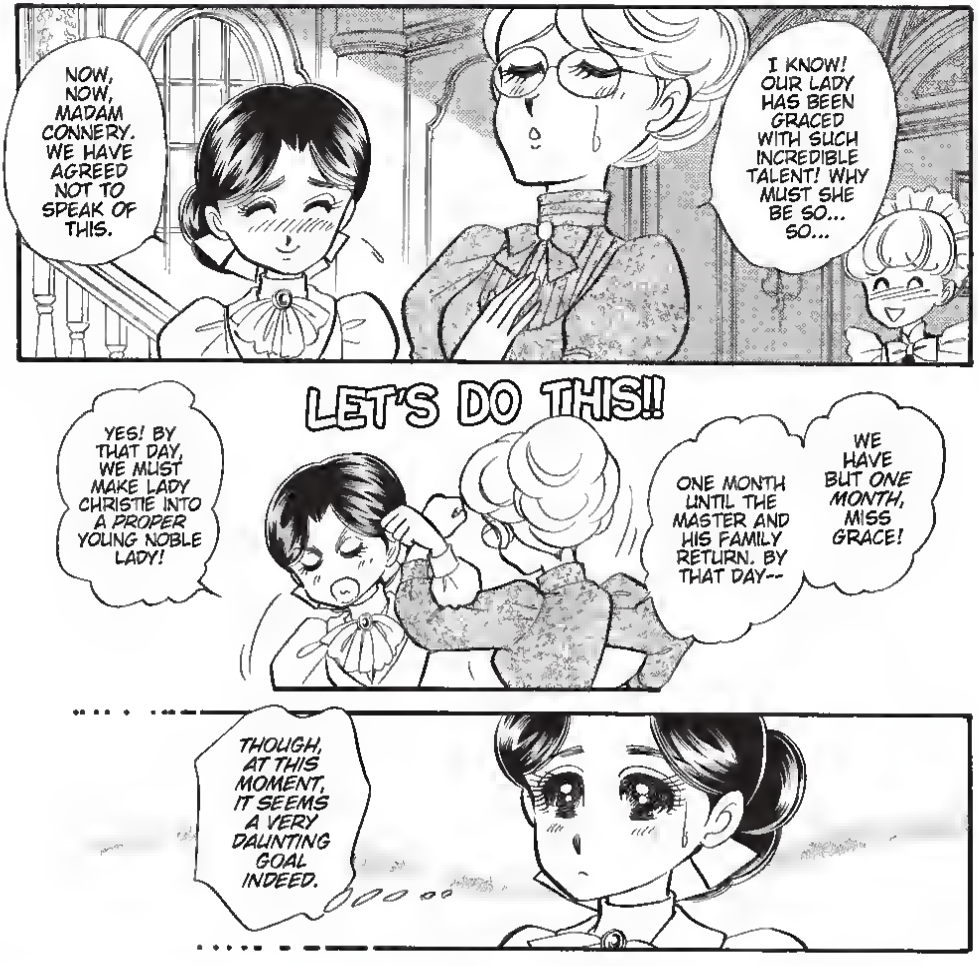

HAS LADY CHRISTIE'S RECITATION LESSON ENDED?
HOW DID SHE FARE?

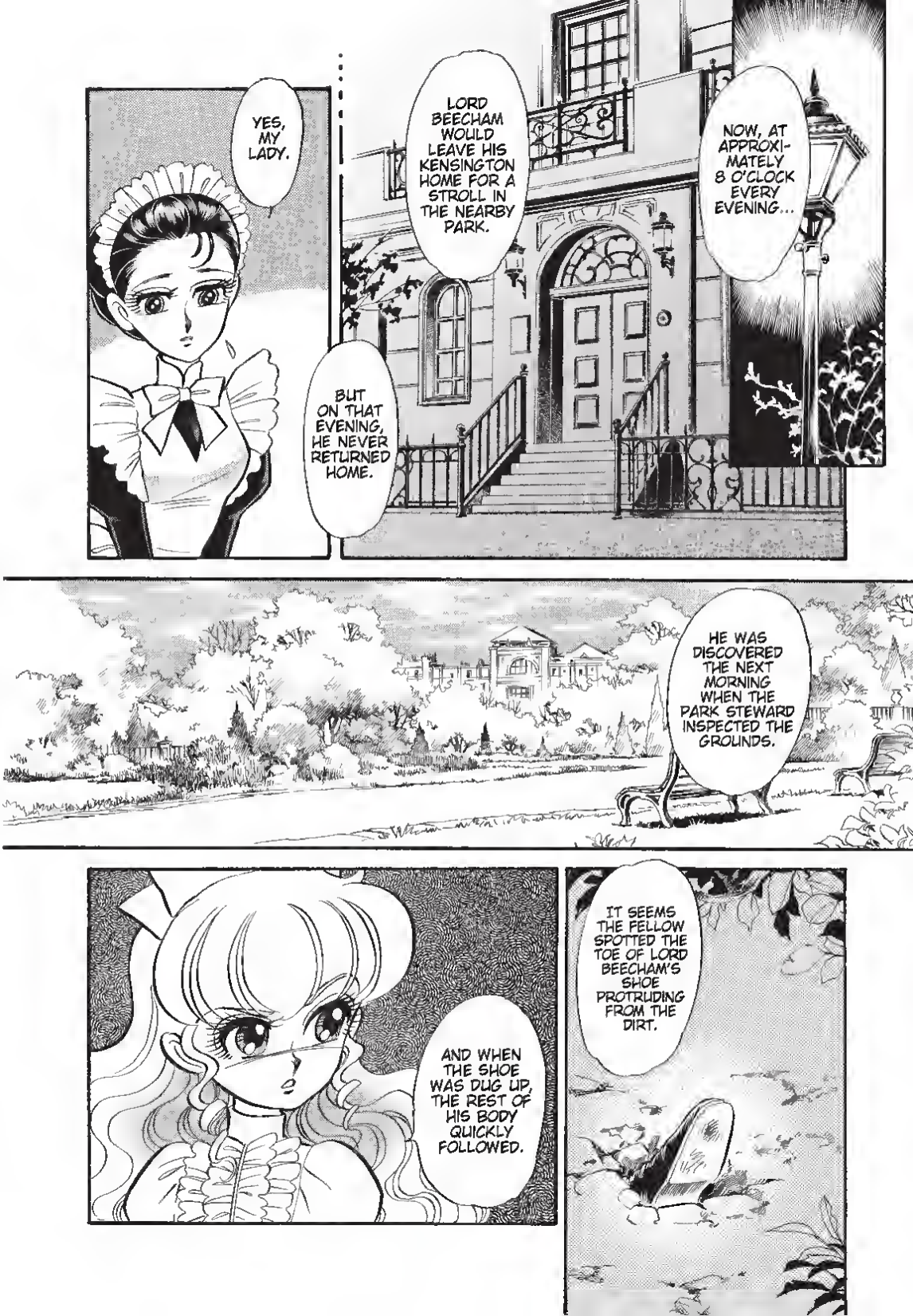


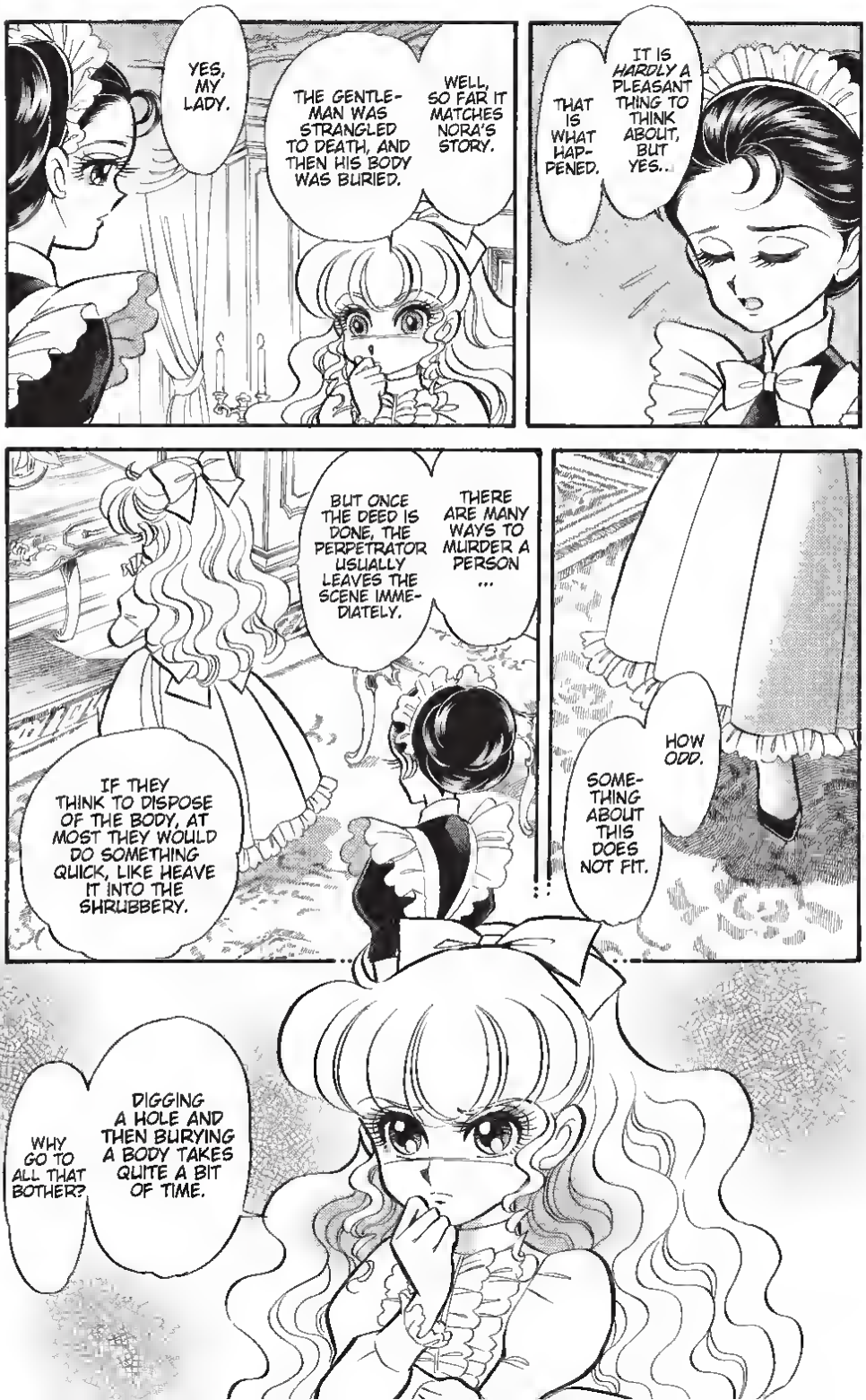

LADY CHRISTIE RECITED THE MOST DIFFICULT OF LATIN VERSES, WITHOUT MISSING A SINGLE SYLLABLE.
MRS. FERGUSON WAS SO IMPRESSED, SHE WAS ALL COMPLIMENTS FOR THE ENTIRE LESSON!
SHE ABSOLUTELY COVERED HERSELF IN GLORY! LADY CHRISTIE HAS A VOICE OF AN ANGEL.


HER DANCING HAS IMPROVED REMARKABLY, AS WELL.


WHEN SHE MAKES HER SOCIAL DEBUT, SHE WILL BE THE FLOWER OF LONDON SOCIETY.
THOUGH, I MUST SAY, I EXPECTED NO LESS OF OUR LADY.
OH, WHAT A BLESSING!


NOW, NOW, MADAM CONNERY. WE HAVE AGREED NOT TO SPEAK OF THIS.
I KNOW! OUR LADY HAS BEEN GRACED WITH SUCH INCREDIBLE TALENT! WHY MUST SHE BE SO... SO...
LET'S DO THIS!!
YES! BY THAT DAY, WE MUST MAKE LADY CHRISTIE INTO A PROPER YOUNG NOBLE LADY!
ONE MONTH UNTIL THE MASTER AND HIS FAMILY RETURN. BY THAT DAY--
WE HAVE BUT ONE MONTH, MISS GRACE!
THOUGH, AT THIS MOMENT, IT SEEMS A VERY DAUNTING GOAL INDEED.
SO THE DECEASED IS ONE LORD CONRAD BEECHAM.
HE WAS A BARON, THEN?

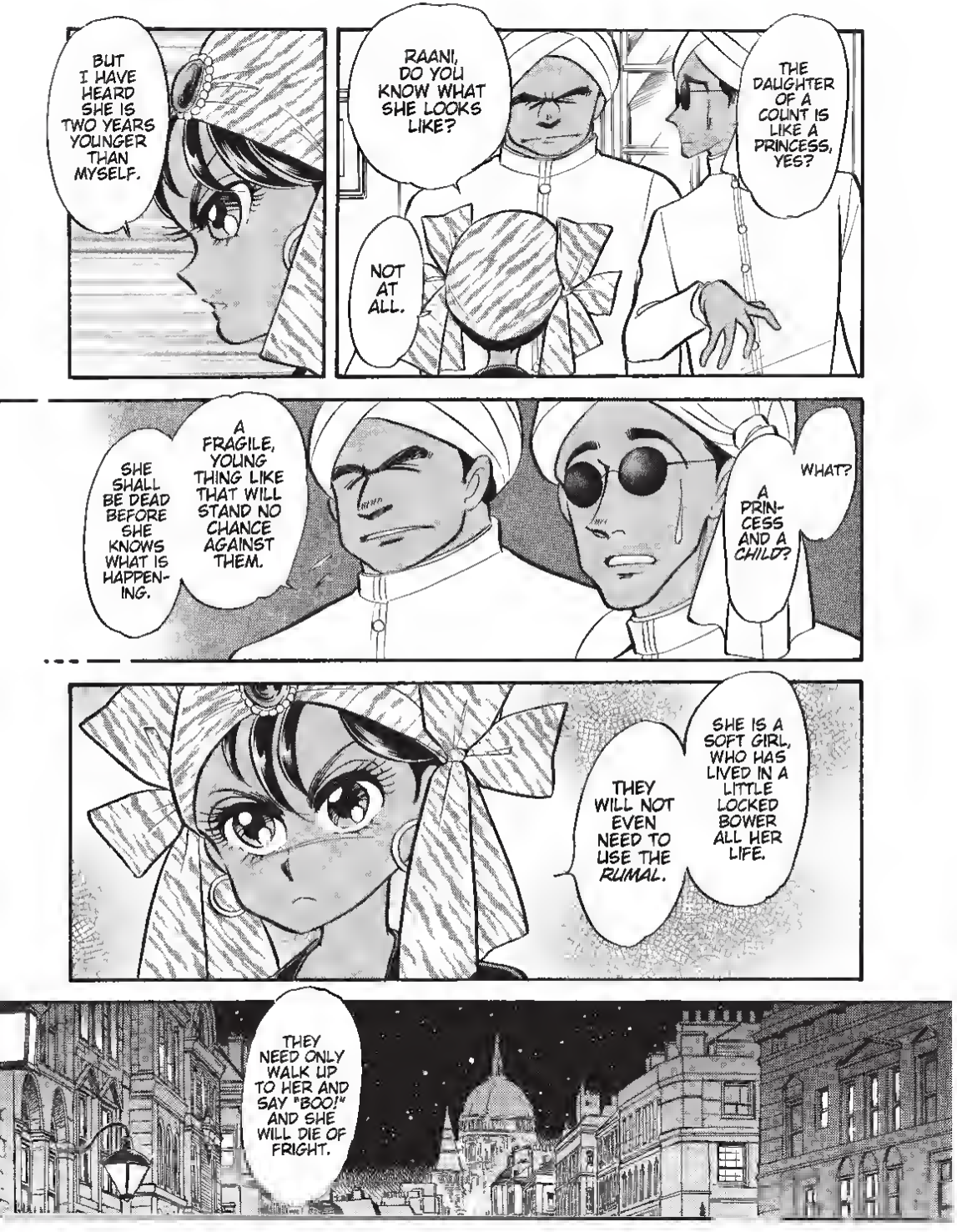

YES, MY LADY.
LORD BEECHAM WOULD LEAVE HIS KENSINGTON HOME FOR A STROLL IN THE NEARBY PARK.
NOW, AT APPROXIMATELY 8 O'CLOCK EVERY EVENING...
BUT ON THAT EVENING, HE NEVER RETURNED HOME.
HE WAS DISCOVERED THE NEXT MORNING WHEN THE PARK STEWARD INSPECTED THE GROUNDS.
AND WHEN THE SHOE WAS DUG UP, THE REST OF HIS BODY QUICKLY FOLLOWED.
IT SEEMS THE FELLOW SPOTTED THE TOE OF LORD BEECHAM'S SHOE PROTRUDING FROM THE DIRT.


YES, MY LADY.
THE GENTLEMAN WAS STRANGLED TO DEATH, AND THEN HIS BODY WAS BURIED.
WELL, SO FAR IT MATCHES NORA'S STORY.
IT IS HARDLY A PLEASANT THING TO THINK ABOUT, BUT YES..
THAT IS WHAT HAPPENED.
THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO MURDER A PERSON ...
BUT ONCE THE DEED IS DONE, THE PERPETRATOR USUALLY LEAVES THE SCENE IMMEDIATELY.
IF THEY THINK TO DISPOSE OF THE BODY, AT MOST THEY WOULD DO SOMETHING QUICK, LIKE HEAVE IT INTO THE SHRUBBERY.
HOW ODD.
SOMETHING ABOUT THIS DOES NOT FIT.
DIGGING A HOLE AND THEN BURYING A BODY TAKES QUITE A BIT OF TIME.
WHY GO TO ALL THAT BOTHER?

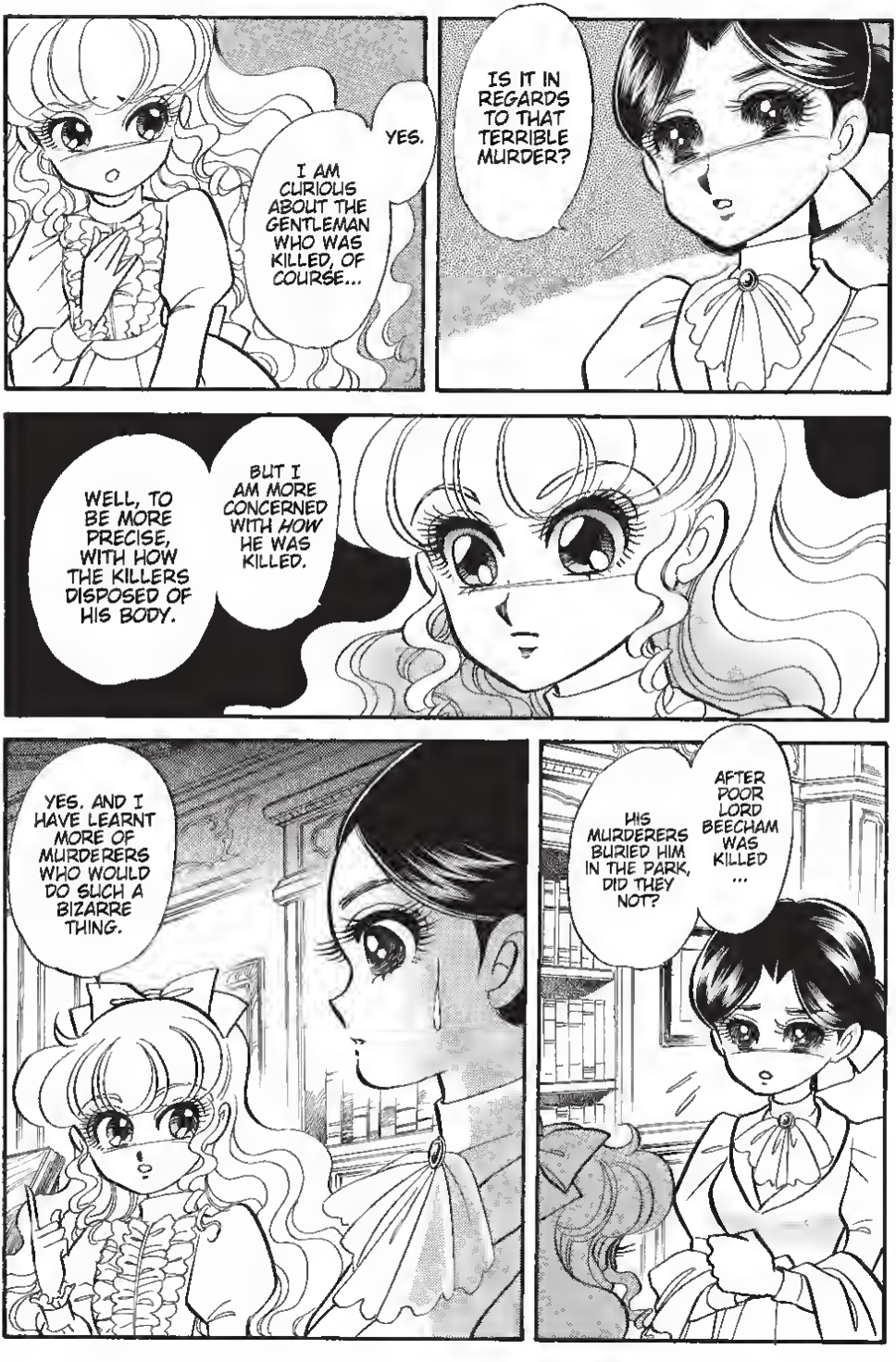
RAANI!
YOU ARE LATE!!
WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?
HAVE MERCY, RAANI. PLEASE...
I HAVE BEEN RUNNING TO AND FRO ALL EVENING.

DID YOU FIND IT? WHERE ARE THEY HIDING?
HOW MANY GROUPS?
MORE THAN THREE, I BELIEVE.
ALL ARE FROM KARDIYA.
KAR-DIYA?
GIVEN JAHANA'S RESOURCES, HE MUST HAVE SENT EVERY ELITE UNDER HIS COMMAND.
THIS IS BE-COMING NASTY.
DO THEY KNOW WE HAVE COME TO LONDON?
I... DO NOT BELIEVE SO, RAANI.

AND STOP CALLING ME "RAANI"! CALL ME "KAPTAAN"!
BUT, RAANI ...
AH, WELL. IT MATTERS LITTLE. SOON, EVEN *THEY* WILL NOTICE.
JUST ONE!
WHAT DOES IT MATTER? WE HAVE OUR DUTY. WE PROTECT ONLY ONE PERSON.
IT SEEMS THEY HAVE ALREADY BEEN AT WORK HERE.
THEY CAN KILL AS MANY OTHERS AS THEY LIKE.
AN ENGLISHMAN HAS BEEN KILLED.
WE MUST SIMPLY ENSURE THAT BY THE TIME THEY DO, IT IS TOO LATE!
AS LONG AS THE COUNT'S DAUGHTER REMAINS SAFE, NOTHING ELSE MATTERS!
CRYSTAL MARGARET HOPE MUST NOT BE HARMED!
OUR TARGET IS THE ONE WE MUST PROTECT WITH OUR LIVES.


BUT I HAVE HEARD SHE IS TWO YEARS YOUNGER THAN MYSELF.
RAANI, DO YOU KNOW WHAT SHE LOOKS LIKE?
THE DAUGHTER OF A COUNT IS LIKE A PRINCESS, YES?
NOT AT ALL.
SHE SHALL BE DEAD BEFORE SHE KNOWS WHAT IS HAPPENING.
A FRAGILE, YOUNG THING LIKE THAT WILL STAND NO CHANCE AGAINST THEM.
WHAT?
A PRINCESS AND A CHILD?
THEY WILL NOT EVEN NEED TO USE THE RUMAL.
SHE IS A SOFT GIRL, WHO HAS LIVED IN A LITTLE LOCKED BOWER ALL HER LIFE.
THEY NEED ONLY WALK UP TO HER AND SAY "BOO!" AND SHE WILL DIE OF FRIGHT.

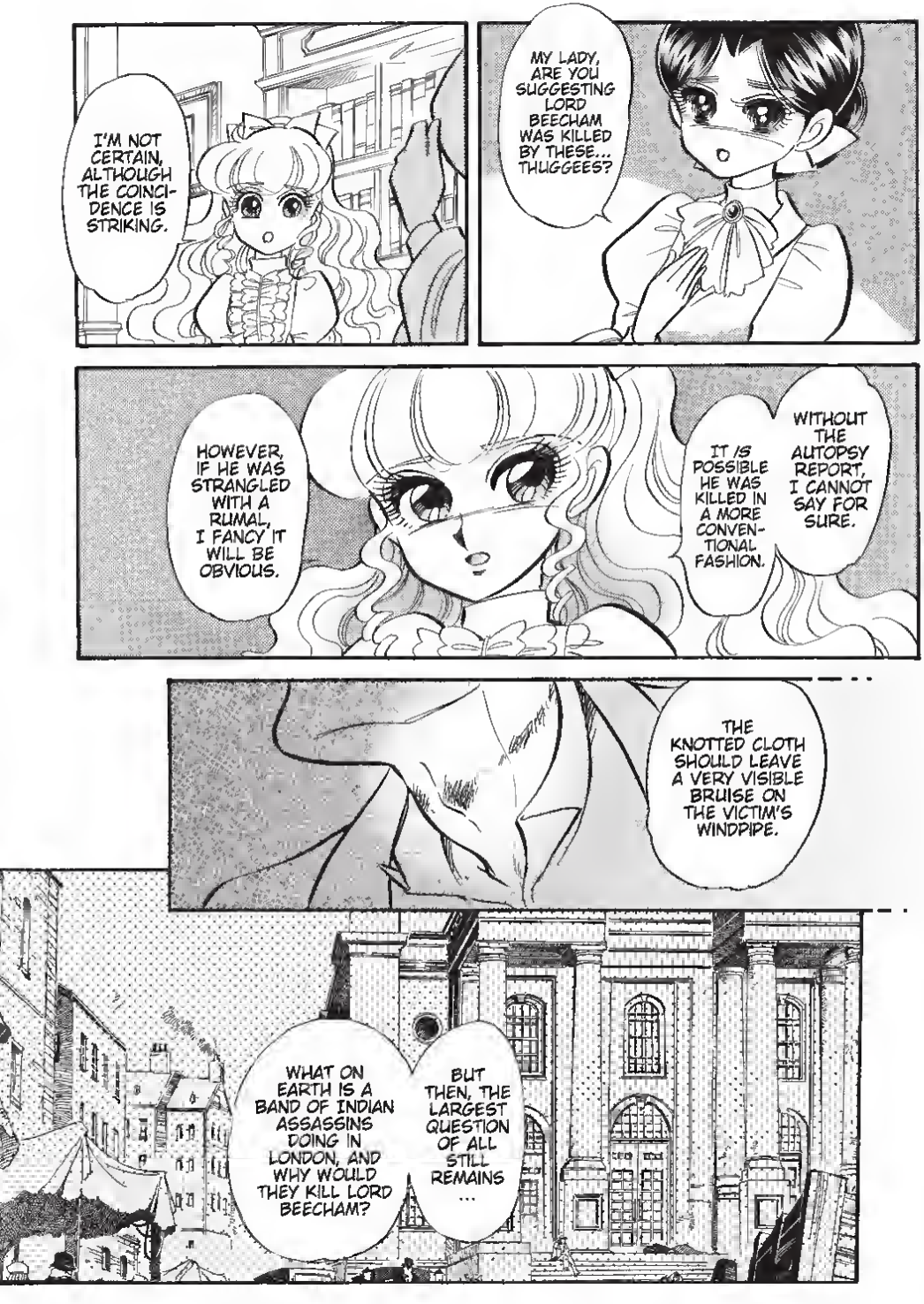
OH! THERE IS A LIGHT IN THE LIBRARY.
MISS GRACE.
MY LADY? ARE YOU IN HERE?
NOK
コンコン
NOK
I THOUGHT YOU HAD RETIRED FOR THE NIGHT.
?
NOT YET. THERE WAS SOMETHING I WANTED TO RESEARCH.

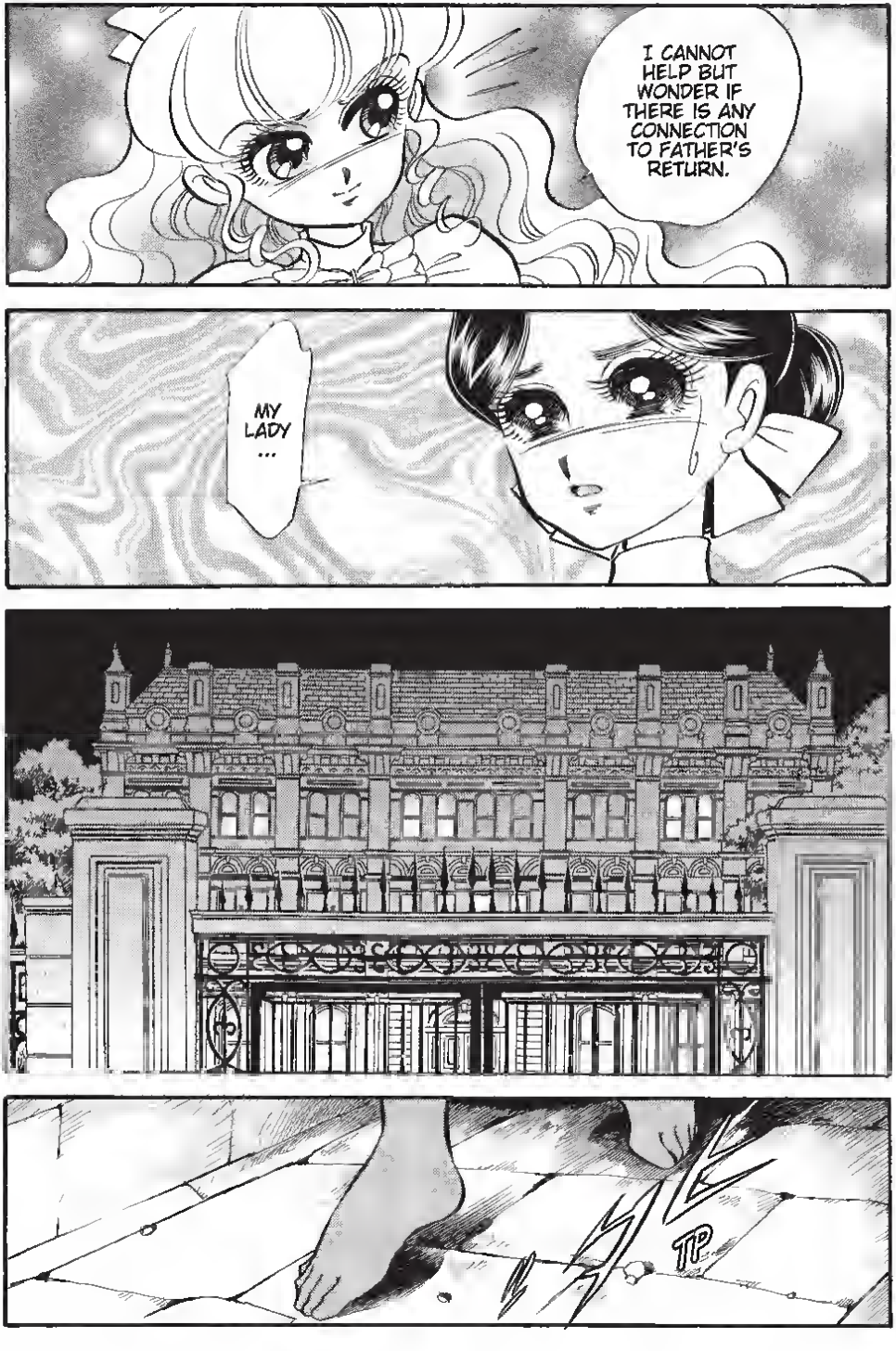

YES.
I AM CURIOUS ABOUT THE GENTLEMAN WHO WAS KILLED, OF COURSE...
IS IT IN REGARDS TO THAT TERRIBLE MURDER?
BUT I AM MORE CONCERNED WITH *HOW* HE WAS KILLED.
WELL, TO BE MORE PRECISE, WITH HOW THE KILLERS DISPOSED OF HIS BODY.
YES. AND I HAVE LEARNT MORE OF MURDERERS WHO WOULD DO SUCH A BIZARRE THING.
AFTER POOR LORD BEECHAM WAS KILLED ...
HIS MURDERERS BURIED HIM IN THE PARK, DID THEY NOT?

MISS GRACE ...
HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE THUGGEE?
"THUG-GEE"?
NO. I CANNOT SAY THAT I HAVE.
THEY ARE A GUILD OF ASSASSINS FROM INDIA.
ASSAS-SINS?!
HOW DREAD-FUL!!
THEY ARE A VERY OLD ORGANIZATION, WITH ORIGINS THAT TIE INTO AN INDIAN RELIGIOUS BROTHERHOOD.

A VERY WARLIKE GROUP, THEY WORSHIP KALI, THE HINDU GODDESS OF DEATH.
!
NOW, THE THUGGEE HAVE QUITE THE UNIQUE METHOD OF KILLING.
THEY STRANGLE PEOPLE USING A YELLOW CLOTH CALLED A "RUMAL."
HOW'S THAT?
THEY USE A KERCHIEF?
NOT QUITE. THE RUMAL IS SLIGHTLY LONGER, AND THEY KNOT IT IN THE CENTER.
I EXPECT THE KNOT IS PRESSED UP AGAINST THE VICTIM'S WINDPIPE, CRUSHING IT AND PREVENTING THEM FROM CALLING FOR HELP.

THEY USE A YELLOW PIECE OF CLOTH...? HOW SINGULAR.
THEIR MYTHOLOGY INCLUDES A LEGEND OF KALI CUTTING OFF A STRIP OF HER OWN SARI.
SHE GAVE THE CLOTH TO HER FOLLOWERS, AND COMMANDED THEM TO USE IT TO KILL.
THUGGEE KILLINGS HAVE ONE OTHER UNIQUE FEATURE ...
HOW TERRI-FYING!
THE THUGGEE TOOK THAT LEGEND TO HEART, AND THUS THEY USE THE RUMAL AS THEIR WEAPON.
!
THEY ALWAYS BURY THE BODY AFTER-WARDS.


I'M NOT CERTAIN, ALTHOUGH THE COINCIDENCE IS STRIKING.
MY LADY, ARE YOU SUGGESTING LORD BEECHAM WAS KILLED BY THESE... THUGGEES?
HOWEVER, IF HE WAS STRANGLED WITH A RUMAL, I FANCY IT WILL BE OBVIOUS.
IT IS POSSIBLE HE WAS KILLED IN A MORE CONVENTIONAL FASHION.
WITHOUT THE AUTOPSY REPORT, I CANNOT SAY FOR SURE.
THE KNOTTED CLOTH SHOULD LEAVE A VERY VISIBLE BRUISE ON THE VICTIM'S WINDPIPE.
WHAT ON EARTH IS A BAND OF INDIAN ASSASSINS DOING IN LONDON, AND WHY WOULD THEY KILL LORD BEECHAM?
BUT THEN, THE LARGEST QUESTION OF ALL STILL REMAINS ...


I CANNOT HELP BUT WONDER IF THERE IS ANY CONNECTION TO FATHER'S RETURN.
MY LADY ...
TP

The Adventure of The Giant Rat of Sumatra (2)

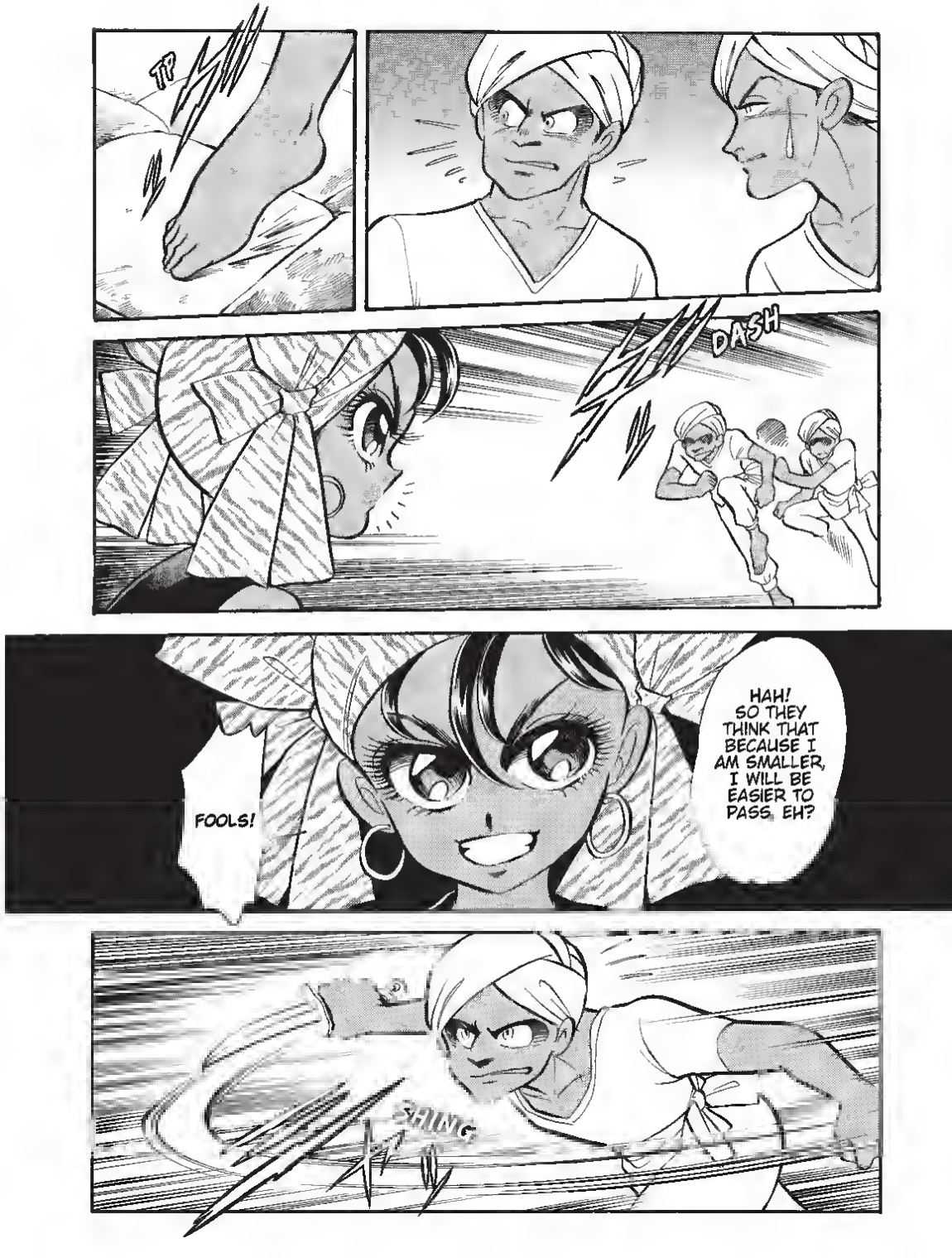
TMP
WSH
TWIST
ZWISH

!!
WHAK
TINK
KLINK
SKSH
SKSHHHH
THUD

TRY TO THROW IT WITH A CURVE, AND IT BARELY CONNECTS AT ALL!
THAT WAS AN UTTER FAIL-URE.
HMPH! I KNEW IT...
IF THIS HAD GONE WHERE I WANTED IT...
HE WOULD NEVER HAVE GOTTEN UP AGAIN!

COME, THEN.
WE SHALL SEE WHO WILL BE OFFERING UP SOULS TO KALI THIS NIGHT.
SHING

SKSH
TMP
COME ON...
DANCE WITH ME.
SHING


TT
DASH
HAH! SO THEY THINK THAT BECAUSE I AM SMALLER, I WILL BE EASIER TO PASS, EH?
FOOLS!
SHING

WOOSH
SWISH
THUD

YOU SHALL NOT ESCAPE ME!
WHIRL
KLANG

THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR GAMES, RAANI.
GANDA!! WHY DID YOU DO THAT?!
OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHAT YOUR FATHER TOLD YOU?
I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN!
KUGA, COLLECT THESE MEN. IT IS TIME WE PULLED BACK.
GOT.
RIGHT.

BETH.
PLEASE TAKE MADAM CONNERY HER MORNING TEA.
ANNIE.
WOULD YOU DELIVER MR. BENSON'S, PLEASE?
SAY, ANN-MARIE.
I WILL BRING LADY CHRISTIE HER TEA MYSELF.
!
YES?
SOMEONE FOUND BLOOD ON THE COBBLES BY THE EAST WALL.

GOOD-NESS!
WHO FOUND THIS?
WAS IT HILL, THE STABLE-HAND?
NAY. 'TWAS GARDNER PIKE.
SEEMS HE HAS A LOOK-SEE AROUND THE EDGE OF THE GROUNDS, EVERY MORNING.
MY, I NEVER REAL-IZED.
AHA!
THERE IT IS.

IT COULD SIMPLY BE FROM A WOUNDED STRAY DOG.
NAY, I FIGURE THIS HAS TO BE HUMAN BLOOD.
IF AN ANIMAL BLED THAT MUCH IN ONE SPOT, YOU'D HAVE FUR OR FEATHERS, TOO.
PERHAPS THERE WAS A BRAWL BETWEEN VAGRANTS.
DON'T SEE VAGRANTS AROUND THIS NEIGHBORHOOD MUCH...
AH, WELL. THIS MUCH BLOOD AIN'T ENOUGH TO KILL A BLOKE.
MIND YOU, HE'LL BE BEDRIDDEN FOR A GOOD FORTNIGHT.
!
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?
!
!

NORA, YOU MUSTN'T TOUCH SUCH THINGS!
HN? THIS SCRAP'S GOT BLOOD ON IT.
UGH... THERE'S A FILTHY RAG ON THE GROUND OVER HERE.
WHY'S IT KNOTTED IN THE MIDDLE, THOUGH?
IT'S GOOD SILK...
GOODNESS! NORA, THROW IT AWAY!
I'M GOING BACK IN.
I NEED TO HAVE WORDS WITH THE STAFF. WE SHOULD ORGANIZE A NIGHTTIME PATROL OF THE GROUNDS.

BAKER STREET
INSPECTOR GREGSON HAS JUST ARRIVED.
SOMETHING AMISS?
HN?
MR. HOLMES.
THERE HAVE BEEN SOME VERY STRANGE DEVELOPMENTS.

I'M NOT CERTAIN.
HAVE YOU GOT A CASE?
HOW SO?
YOU SEE, YESTERDAY--WELL, VERY EARLY THIS MORNING...
NEAR DAWN, IT WAS--AN OFFICER ON NIGHT WATCH AT OUR OFFICES NOTICED SOMETHING PLACED ACROSS THE STREET.
AND DISCOVERED FOUR MEN WHO APPEARED TO BE INDIAN, TIED TO A LAMPPOST.
FROM WHAT HE REPORTS, THE FELLOW APPROACHED THE THING CAREFULLY...

?
THAT IS NOT THE MOST PECULIAR BIT. ONE OF THE FOUR HAD A NOTE ON HIM.
IT WAS SHORT, WRITTEN IN A CLEAN HAND. IT SAID...
"THESE MEN KILLED LORD BEECHAM."
LORD BEECHAM? WASN'T HE THE UNFORTUNATE FELLOW KILLED IN KENSINGTON PARK?
YES.
NOW WE COME TO THE TROUBLING PART.

ALL FOUR MEN WERE INJURED.
MOST OF IT WAS MERELY BRUISES AND SCRAPES, BUT ONE WAS BLEEDING BADLY.
OUR OFFICERS GAVE THEM WHAT AID THEY COULD...
HOWEVER, IT WAS DETERMINED THAT THE MEN WOULD NEED PROPER MEDICAL ATTENTION.
ALL FOUR WERE LOADED INTO A PADDY WAGON, TO BE SENT TO THE HOSPITAL.
NOW, IT WAS STILL EARLY MORNING, AND FEW OFFICERS WERE ON DUTY.
THE SUPER-VISOR HADN'T ARRIVED, SO THE OFFICER GUARDING THE WAGON WENT TO FETCH HIM...
WHEN HE RETURNED, THE PADDY WAGON WAS GONE.

IT WAS DISCOVERED QUICKLY, ONLY ABOUT TWO BLOCKS DOWN THE STREET.
HOWEVER, THE FOUR INDIAN MEN HAD VANISHED.
THE WAGON WAS UNSUPER-VISED FOR A FEW MINUTES, YES?
PERHAPS ONE OF THE FOUR ESCAPED IN THAT TIME, AND DROVE THE WAGON AWAY.
PADDY WAGON DOORS ARE LOCKED FROM THE OUTSIDE.
IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR ONE TO OPEN IT FROM THE INSIDE.
PRECISELY. I MUST SAY, WE ARE ENTIRELY PERPLEXED BY THIS CASE.
WELL THEN...
WE SHALL SIMPLY HAVE TO INVESTIGATE IT FROM THE VERY BEGIN-NING.
COME ALONG, WATSON.
LET US HAVE A LOOK AT THE CRIME SCENE IN KENSINGTON PARK.

I MUST CONFESS, I HAD A TOUCH OF CURIOSITY ABOUT THIS CASE WHEN I FIRST READ ABOUT IT.
I WOULD MUCH APPRECIATE BEING GIVEN ACCESS TO ALL THE RELATED REPORTS THAT SCOTLAND YARD MAY HAVE.
AFTER THAT...
221B
A VICTIM KILLED, THEN BURIED...
THE POSSIBLE INDIAN CONNEC-TION...
RIGHT FROM THE START, WE HAVE BEEN HANDED TWO LARGE KEYS TO THE TRUTH.
WE HAVE LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO OPEN THE DOOR AND SEE WHERE IT LEADS.

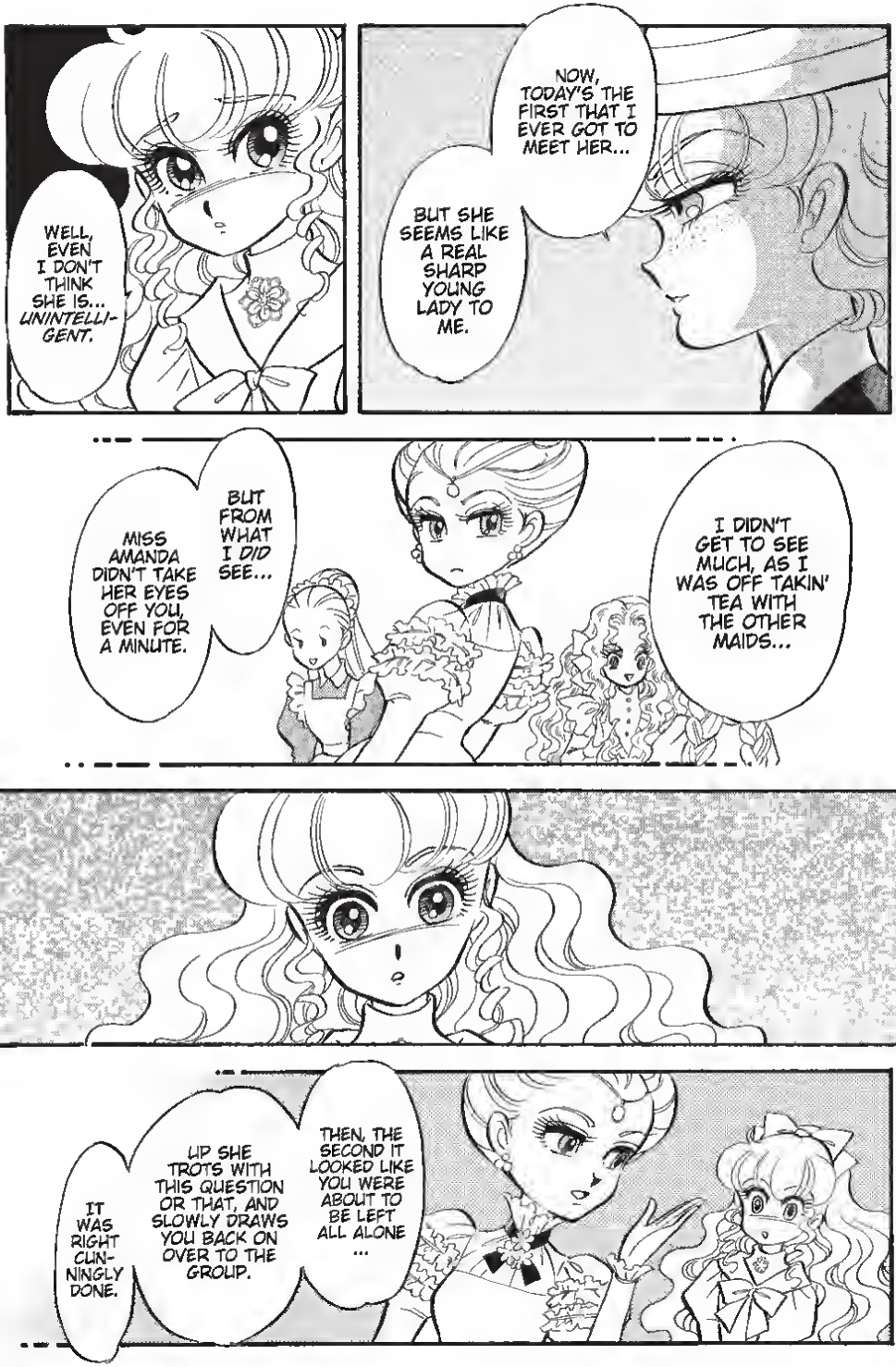
LADY CHRISTIE.

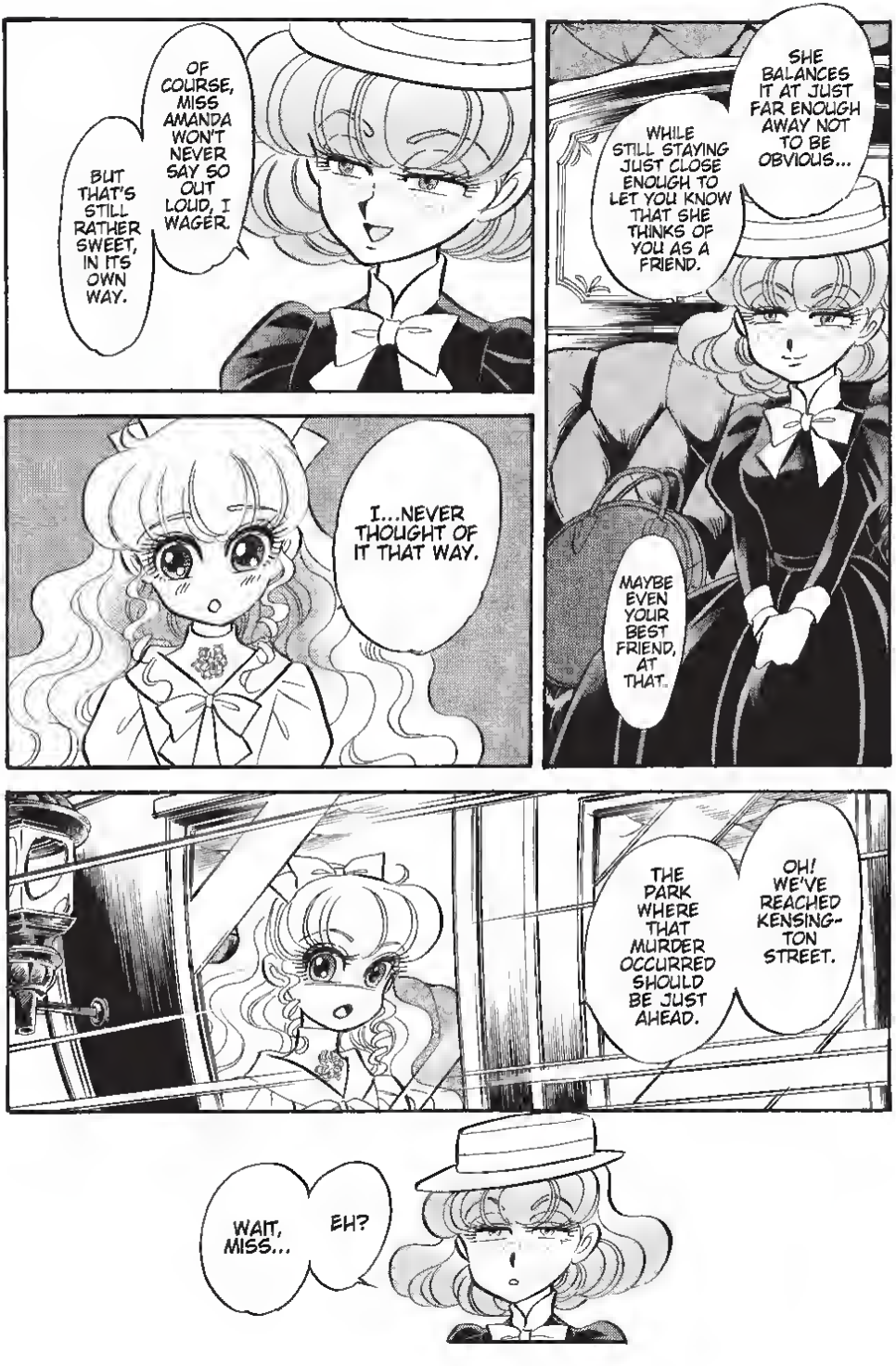
NO, NOT TODAY. MISS GRACE HAS BEEN RATHER BUSY OF LATE.

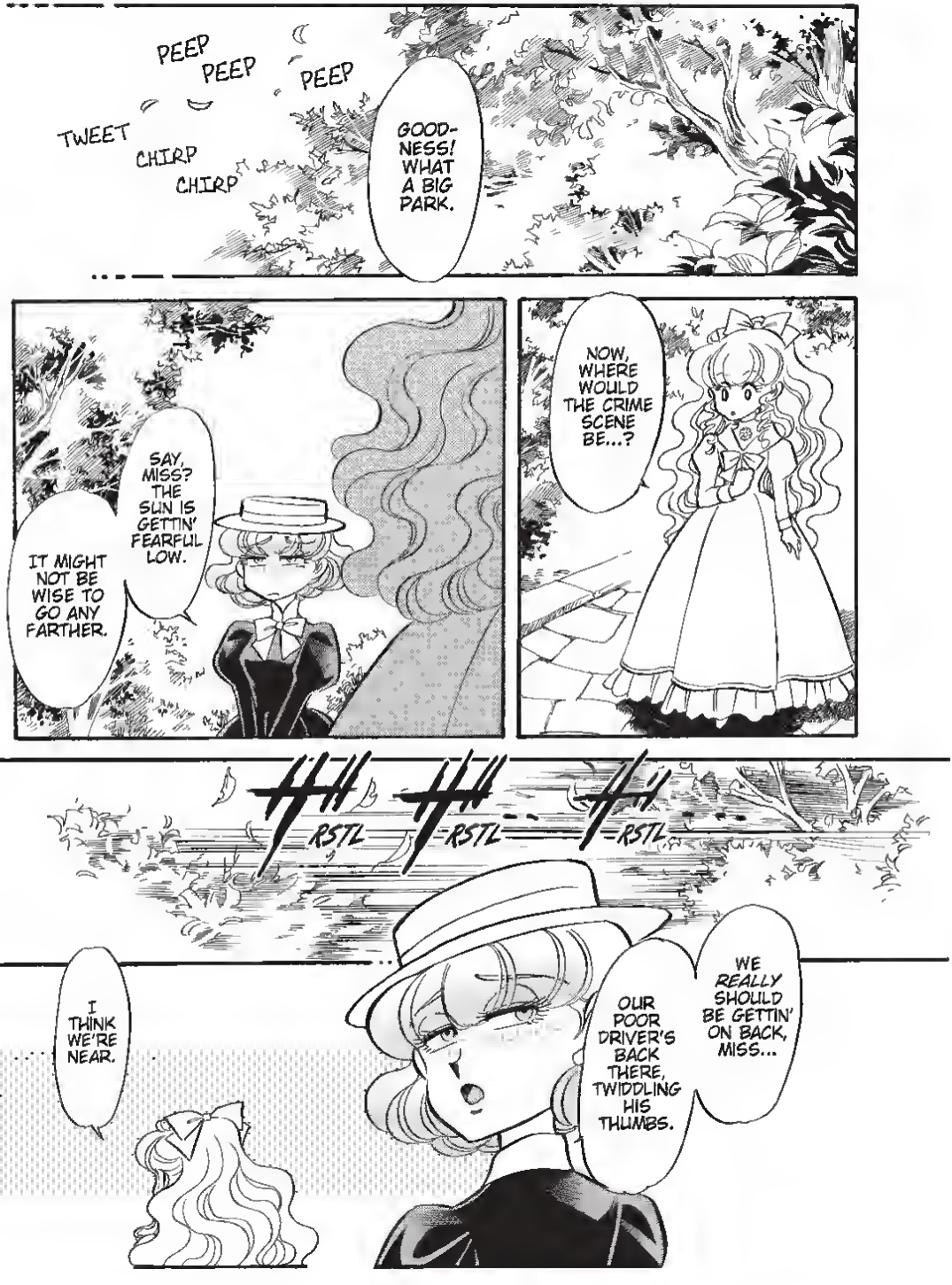
DID YOUR GOVERNESS NOT ACCOMPANY YOU TODAY? I AM SORRY TO HAVE MISSED HER.

PRO-PER? YOU?!
AFTER ALL, IT IS ONLY A MONTH UNTIL FATHER AND MOTHER RETURN FROM INDIA.
SHE IS DETERMINED TO SEE ME MADE INTO A "PROPER" YOUNG LADY BY THEN.
DON'T BE ABSURD.
YOU COULD NEVER POSSIBLY BE PROPER. YOU WOULDN'T KNOW WHAT THAT WAS, EVEN IF IT KICKED YOU IN THE SHIN!
THAT SEEMS A HAIR TOO FAR, LADY AMANDA.
IT WAS HARDLY POLITE.
OH, BUT IT IS THE TRUTH. WHAT SAY WE MAKE A FRIENDLY WAGER, HM?
SHOULD YOU BECOME A *PROPER* LADY, DEVOTED TO THE PURSUIT OF FASHION, SWEETS, AND HANDSOME GENTLEMEN ...
THEN I SHALL BESTOW UPON YOU ANY ONE OF MY POSSESSIONS YOU CHOOSE.
OHO HO HO!
GOOD LUCK TO YOU, LADY CHRISTIE.

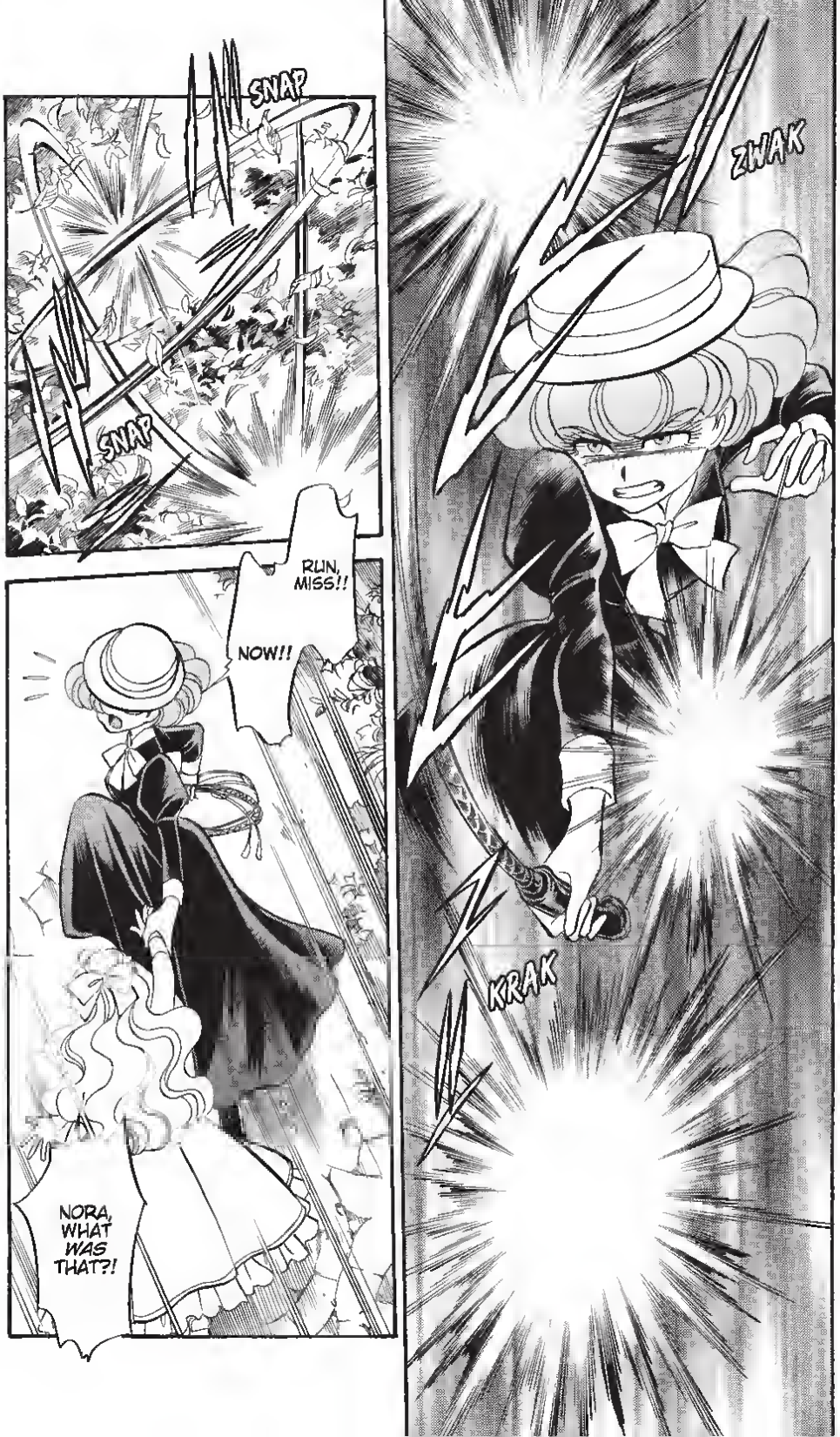
WELL, SHE DID SAY SHE'D GIVE YOU ANYTHING YOU WANTED, RIGHT?
WHY MUST AMANDA ALWAYS BE SO SNIPPY TOWARDS ME?
ARGH!
WHAT A DISAGREE-ABLE GIRL!
SHE'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING OF HERS THAT YOU WANT. THAT'S GENEROUS, AIN'T IT?
SO IF YOU TURN INTO ONE OF THEM FEATHER-BRAINED, YOUNG SOCIETY GEESE...
HM?
!
I RECKON SHE MUST WANT TO SEE YOU HAPPY.
ELSE SHE WOULD NOT HAVE MADE THE WAGER IN THE FIRST PLACE.
SHE IS LITTERLY CERTAIN I WILL FAIL.
HONESTLY, SHE IS *SUCH* A DISAGREE-ABLE GIRL.


WELL, EVEN I DON'T THINK SHE IS... UN/INTELLI-GENT.
BUT SHE SEEMS LIKE A REAL SHARP YOUNG LADY TO ME.
NOW, TODAY'S THE FIRST THAT I EVER GOT TO MEET HER...
MISS AMANDA DIDN'T TAKE HER EYES OFF YOU, EVEN FOR A MINUTE.
BUT FROM WHAT I DID SEE...
I DIDN'T GET TO SEE MUCH, AS I WAS OFF TAKIN' TEA WITH THE OTHER MAIDS...
?
IT WAS RIGHT CUN-NINGLY DONE.
UP SHE TROTS WITH THIS QUESTION OR THAT, AND SLOWLY DRAWS YOU BACK ON OVER TO THE GROUP.
THEN, THE SECOND IT LOOKED LIKE YOU WERE ABOUT TO BE LEFT ALL ALONE ...


OF COURSE, MISS AMANDA WON'T NEVER SAY SO OUT LOUD, I WAGER.
BUT THAT'S STILL RATHER SWEET, IN ITS OWN WAY.
SHE BALANCES IT AT JUST FAR ENOUGH AWAY NOT TO BE OBVIOUS...
WHILE STILL STAYING JUST CLOSE ENOUGH TO LET YOU KNOW THAT SHE THINKS OF YOU AS A FRIEND.
MAYBE EVEN YOUR BEST FRIEND, AT THAT.
I...NEVER THOUGHT OF IT THAT WAY.
OH! WE'VE REACHED KENSING-TON STREET.
THE PARK WHERE THAT MURDER OCCURRED SHOULD BE JUST AHEAD.
EH?
WAIT, MISS...


PEEP
PEEP
PEEP
TWEET
CHIRP
CHIRP
GOOD-NESS! WHAT A BIG PARK.
NOW, WHERE WOULD THE CRIME SCENE BE...?
SAY, MISS? THE SUN IS GETTIN' FEARFUL LOW.
IT MIGHT NOT BE WISE TO GO ANY FARTHER.
RSTL
RSTL
RSTL
I THINK WE'RE NEAR.
OUR POOR DRIVER'S BACK THERE, TWIDDLING HIS THUMBS.
WE *REALLY* SHOULD BE GETTIN' ON BACK, MISS...

RSTL
BACK TO THE CARRIAGE! NOW!!
MISS!
!!
NORA? WHAT ARE YOU--?
FWISH
!!


SNAP
SNAP
RUN, MISS!!
NOW!!
NORA, WHAT WAS THAT?!
ZWAK
KRAK

RSTL
RSTL
WHAT ON EARTH IS GOING--?!
FWSH
!!

The Adventure of The Giant Rat of Sumatra (3)

ULK!!
YANK
MISS!!
!!!
THUK

?!
KOFF
KOFF
WHUMP
THUD
SLICE

MISS!
KOFF
KOFF
HEYA
HEYA
HEYA
BLAST IT ALL!
KLANG
WOOSH

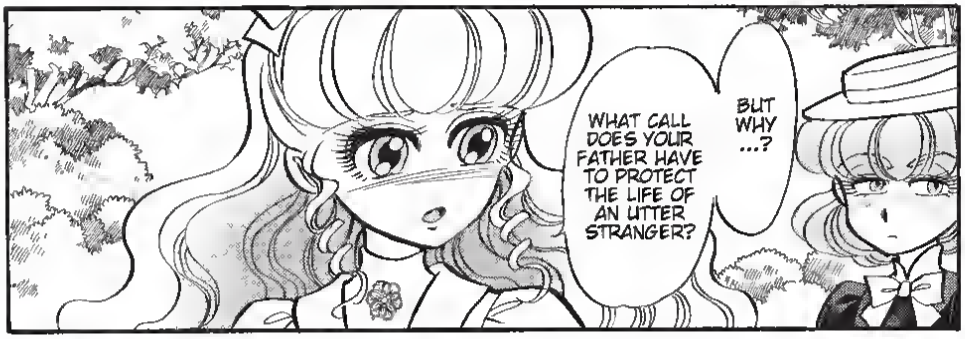
WHUNK
EXCELLENT! THIS LOT DEFINITELY HAD MORE SPIRIT THAN THOSE WE DISPATCHED LAST NIGHT.
SKCH!
WE HAVE SUBDUED THEM ALL.
RAANI.
TWITCH
TWITCH

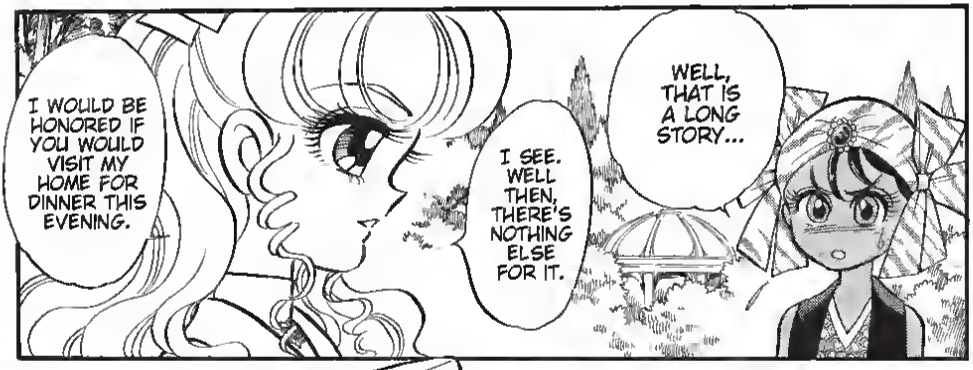
THEY ARE THUG-GEE, ARE THEY NOT?
THOSE MEN...
HUH ...
SO THIS IS THE HOPE PRIN-CESS.
STAY BACK!
?
YOU KNOW OF THE THUGGEE?
WERE THESE THE MEN WHO KILLED LORD BEECHAM?
BUT I NEVER EXPECTED TO HAVE SUCH AN ABRUPT AND INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF ONE!
YES. AND I HAVE READ ABOUT THE RUMAL ...

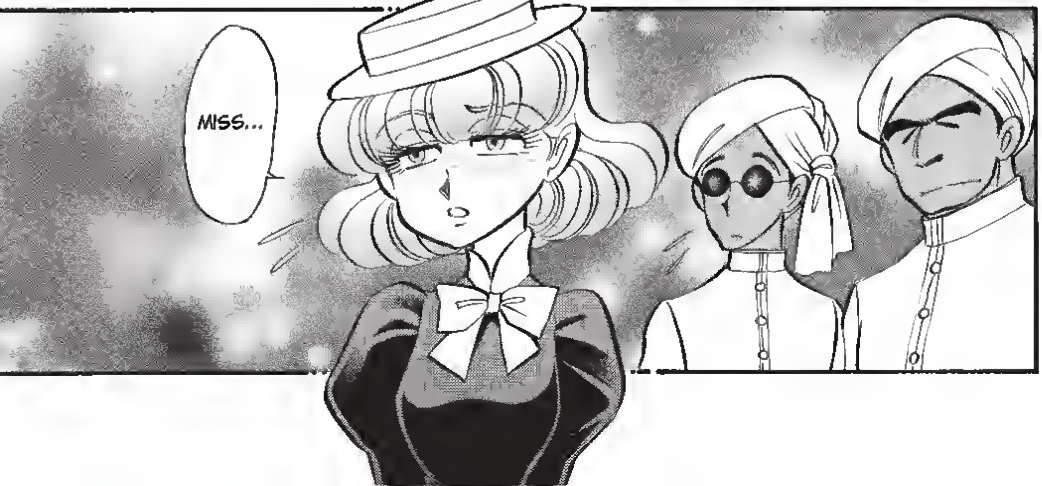
RAANI, WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THESE FOUR?
HRM... IT WOULD SEEM YOU ARE NOT QUITE THE HOTHOUSE FLOWER, AFTER ALL.
AFTER ALL, WE WERE TOLD THAT THOUGH WE MAY KILL ON THE SEA, WE MUST REFRAIN WHILE ON LAND.
ARE ANY DEAD?
NO, RAANI.
WE TEMPERED OUR BLOWS.
YES, RAANI.
WE ARE PULLING OUT. TAKE THESE MEN AND LEAVE THEM FOR THE POLICE, AS YOU DID WITH THE OTHERS.
RIGHT.
AS FOR YOU, PRINCESS... THEY WILL COME AFTER YOU AGAIN.
TRY TO STAY PUT AND KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN, YES?

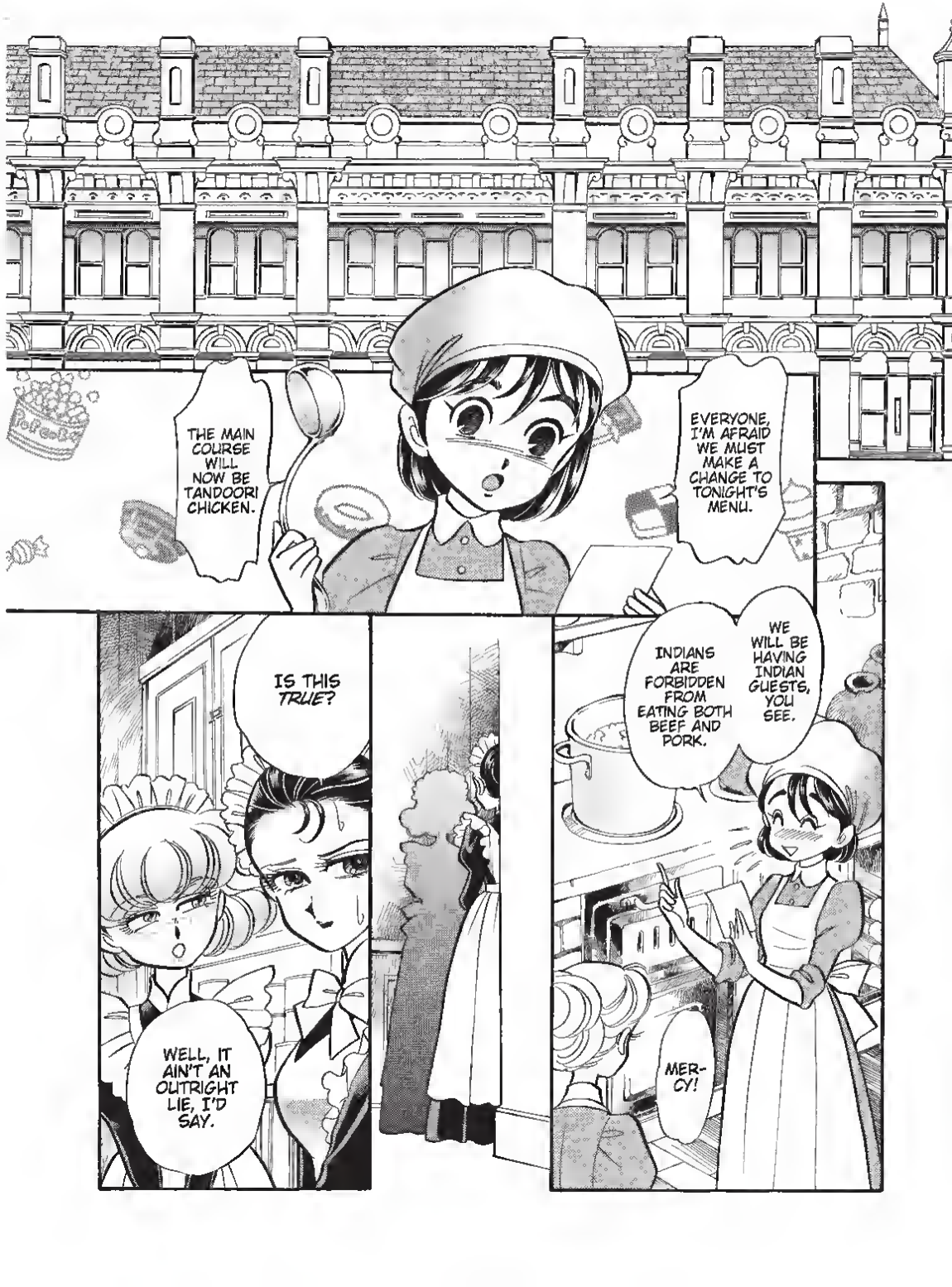
GOOD-BYE.
WAIT A MOMENT!
YOU SAY I WILL BE ATTACKED AGAIN. WHY?
WHAT REASON WOULD A THUGGEE BAND HAVE TO KILL ME?
FURTHER-MORE, WHILE YOU CLEARLY KNOW WHO I AM...
I HAVEN'T THE VAGUEST NOTION WHO *YOU* MIGHT BE.
WELL, YOU ARE SIMPLY BRIMMING WITH QUESTIONS, PRINCESS.
MY NAME IS *CHRISTIE*, NOT "PRINCESS." AND I SHALL BE MUCH BETTER DISPOSED TOWARDS YOU IF YOU WOULD REFER TO ME AS *LADY* CHRISTIE, AS IS PROPER.

MY NAME IS NADA.
I AM THE DAUGHTER OF THE HONORABLE PIRATE KAYIRHAN, THE GIANT RAT OF SUMATRA.
FATHER KNEW THE THUGGEE WOULD BE AFTER YOU, SO HE SENT ME TO PROTECT YOU.

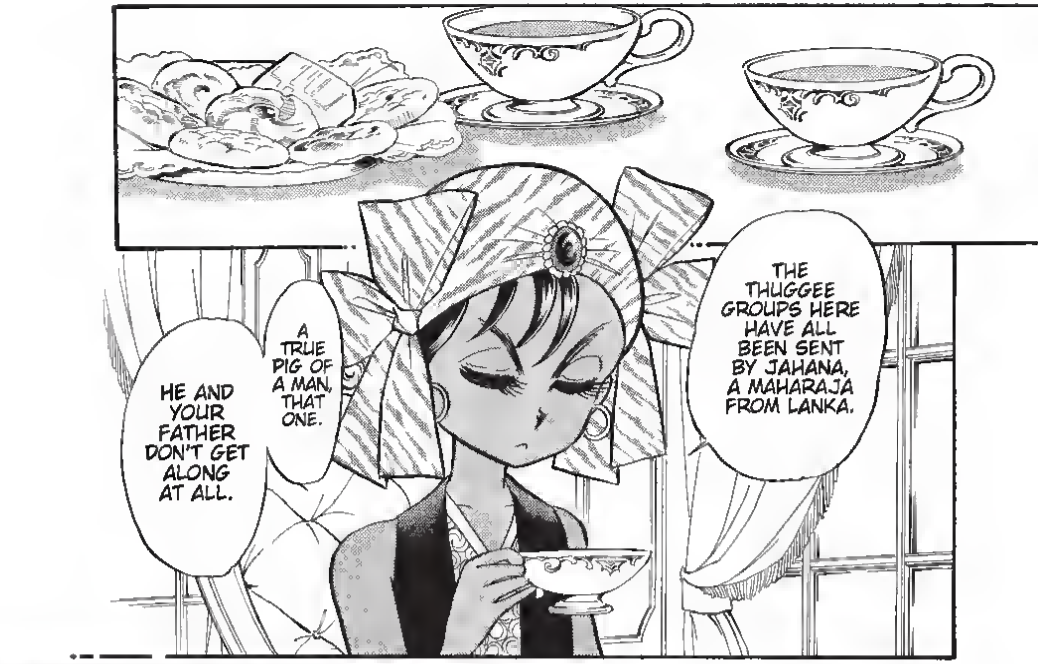

BUT WHY ...?
WHAT CALL DOES YOUR FATHER HAVE TO PROTECT THE LIFE OF AN UTTER STRANGER?

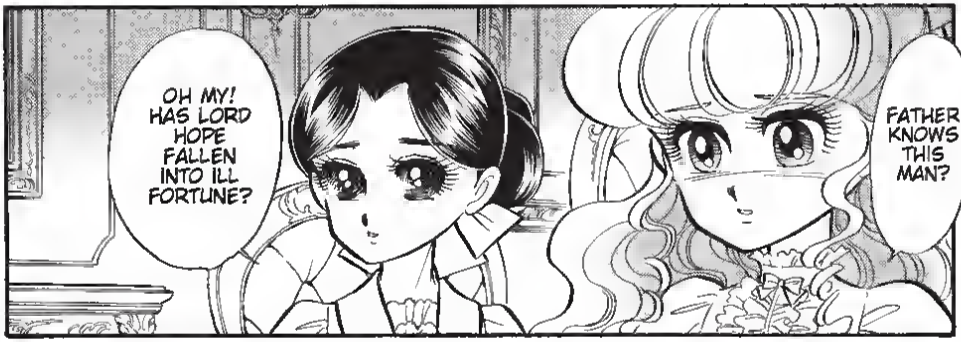

WELL, THAT IS A LONG STORY...
I SEE. WELL THEN, THERE'S NOTHING ELSE FOR IT.
I WOULD BE HONORED IF YOU WOULD VISIT MY HOME FOR DINNER THIS EVENING.

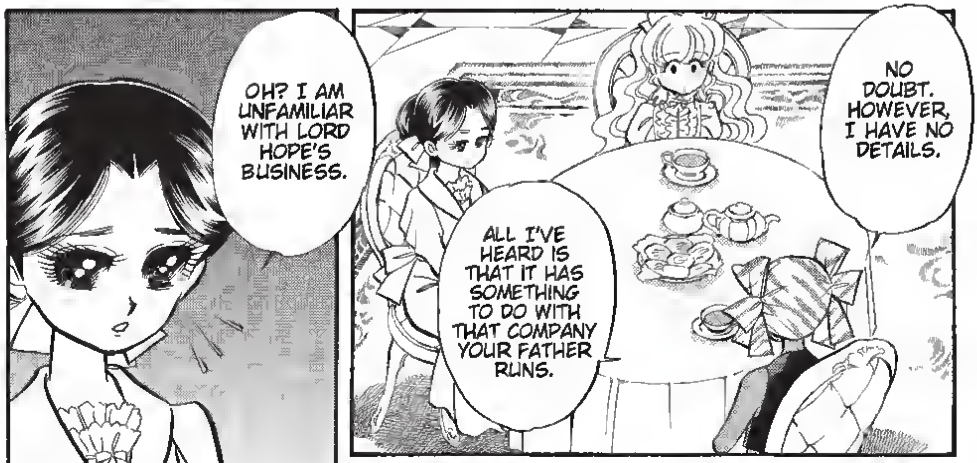

MISS...

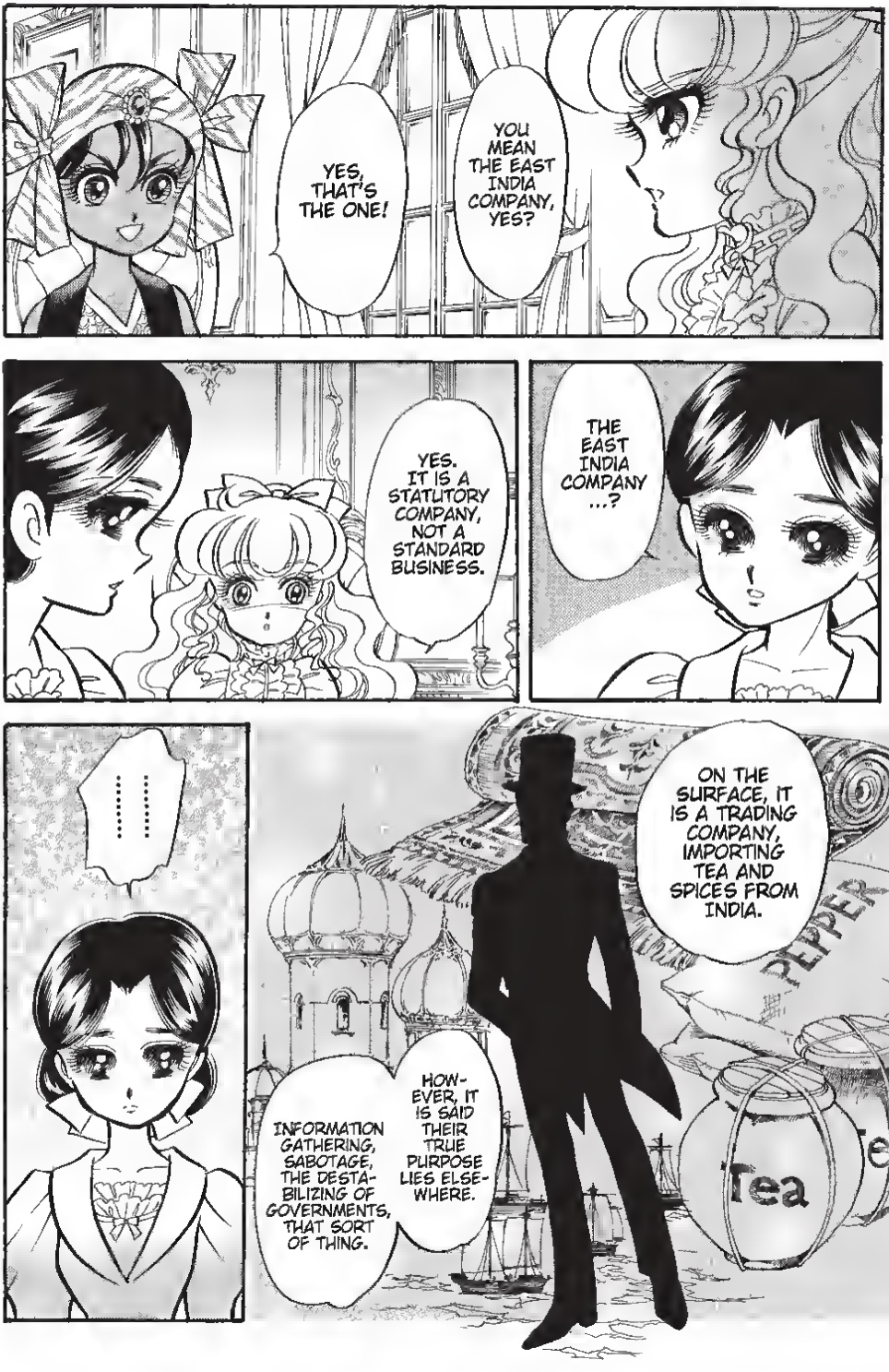

EVERYONE, I'M AFRAID WE MUST MAKE A CHANGE TO TONIGHT'S MENU.
THE MAIN COURSE WILL NOW BE TANDOORI CHICKEN.
WE WILL BE HAVING INDIAN GUESTS, YOU SEE.
INDIANS ARE FORBIDDEN FROM EATING BOTH BEEF AND PORK.
MER-CY!
IS THIS *TRUE*?
WELL, IT AIN'T AN OUTRIGHT LIE, I'D SAY.

I FIGURE IT MUST'VE BEEN THEM THAT SPILLED IT.
REMEMBER THE BLOOD ON THE COBBLES THIS MORNING?
BUT A PIRATE'S DAUGHTER ...?
IF THEM THUGGEE LOT ARE AFTER THE MISS, LIKE NADA SAYS, THEY MIGHT'VE TRIED TO CREEP IN. THEN NADA'S GANG FOUGHT 'EM OFF.
THEN, WHEN THE MISS WAS ATTACKED AT THE PARK, THE BLIGHTER WAS USING THE SAME THING.
I KNEW THERE WAS SOMETHING FUNNY ABOUT HOW IT WAS KNOTTED IN THE MIDDLE.
THAT YELLOW SILK.
THEN THERE'S THAT SCRAP OF RAG I FOUND.
ARE YOU SAYING WE HAVE BEEN UNDER ATTACK SINCE YESTERDAY EVENING?
MY GOOD-NESS!

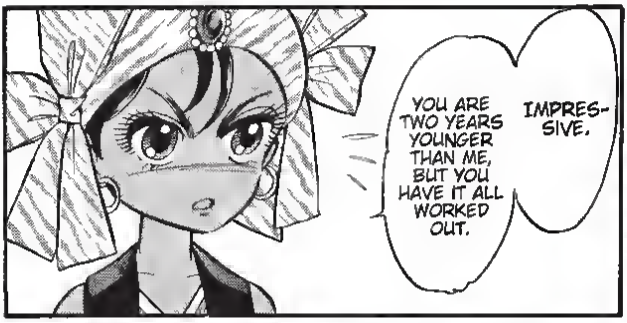

THE THUGGEE GROUPS HERE HAVE ALL BEEN SENT BY JAHANA, A MAHARAJA FROM LANKA.
A TRUE PIG OF A MAN, THAT ONE.
HE AND YOUR FATHER DON'T GET ALONG AT ALL.


FATHER KNOWS THIS MAN?
OH MY! HAS LORD HOPE FALLEN INTO ILL FORTUNE?


NO DOUBT. HOWEVER, I HAVE NO DETAILS.
ALL I'VE HEARD IS THAT IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THAT COMPANY YOUR FATHER RUNS.
OH? I AM UNFAMILIAR WITH LORD HOPE'S BUSINESS.


YES, THAT'S THE ONE!
YOU MEAN THE EAST INDIA COMPANY, YES?
YES. IT IS A STATUTORY COMPANY, NOT A STANDARD BUSINESS.
THE EAST INDIA COMPANY ...?
.....
INFORMATION GATHERING, SABOTAGE, THE DESTABILIZING OF GOVERNMENTS, THAT SORT OF THING.
HOWEVER, IT IS SAID THEIR TRUE PURPOSE LIES ELSEWHERE.
ON THE SURFACE, IT IS A TRADING COMPANY, IMPORTING TEA AND SPICES FROM INDIA.
PEPPER
Tea
Tea

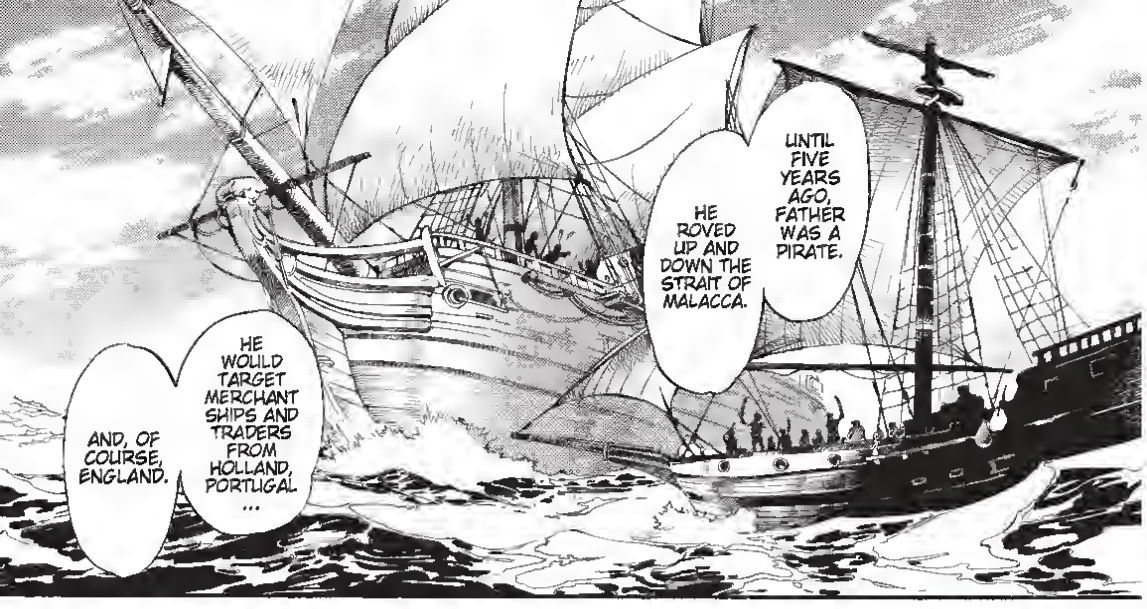
I DO NOT THINK FATHER IS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIONS OF THE COMPANY.
HOWEVER, HE IS THE BRITISH REPRESENTATIVE TO INDIA.
AS HE IS DEEPLY CONNECTED WITH BOTH THE RAJ AND THE NATIVE GOVERNMENT ...
HE MUST MAINTAIN SOME CONTACT WITH THE COMPANY.

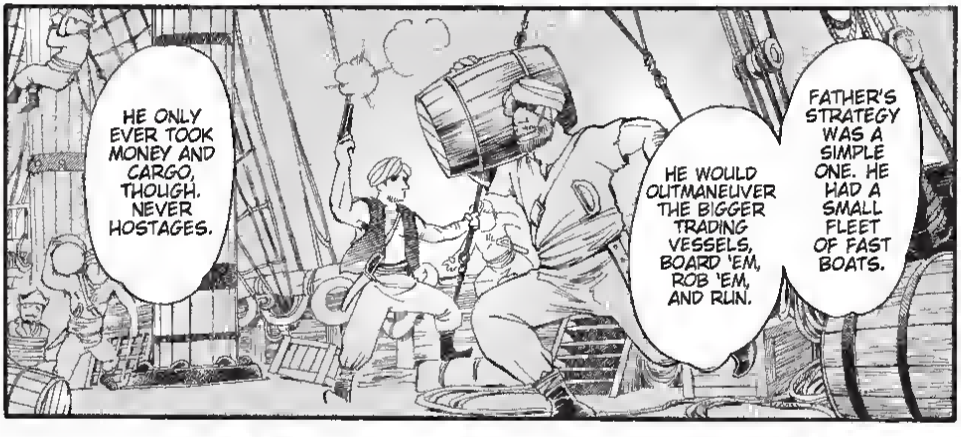

IMPRESSIVE.
YOU ARE TWO YEARS YOUNGER THAN ME, BUT YOU HAVE IT ALL WORKED OUT.

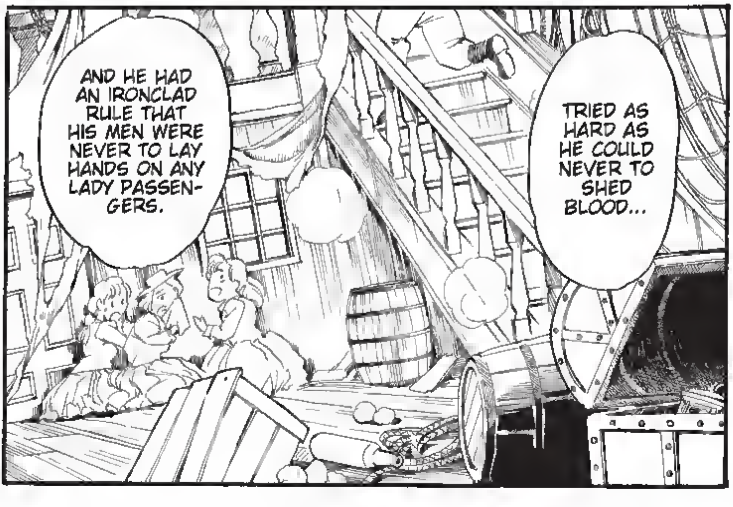
NOW, I DOUBT THE INDIANS VIEW US BRITISH KINDLY.
WE RULE THEIR LAND. WE HAVE STRATIFIED THEIR SOCIETY, AND WE TAKE THEIR WEALTH FOR OURSELVES.
IN FACT, I WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF, ON THE WHOLE, INDIA SEES US AS THEIR ENEMY.

NOT ALL. WHAT HAS ME CONFUSED IS WHY YOUR FATHER WOULD WISH TO PROTECT ME.
BY ALL RIGHTS, MY FAMILY SHOULD BE A DEADLY ENEMY TO YOURS.

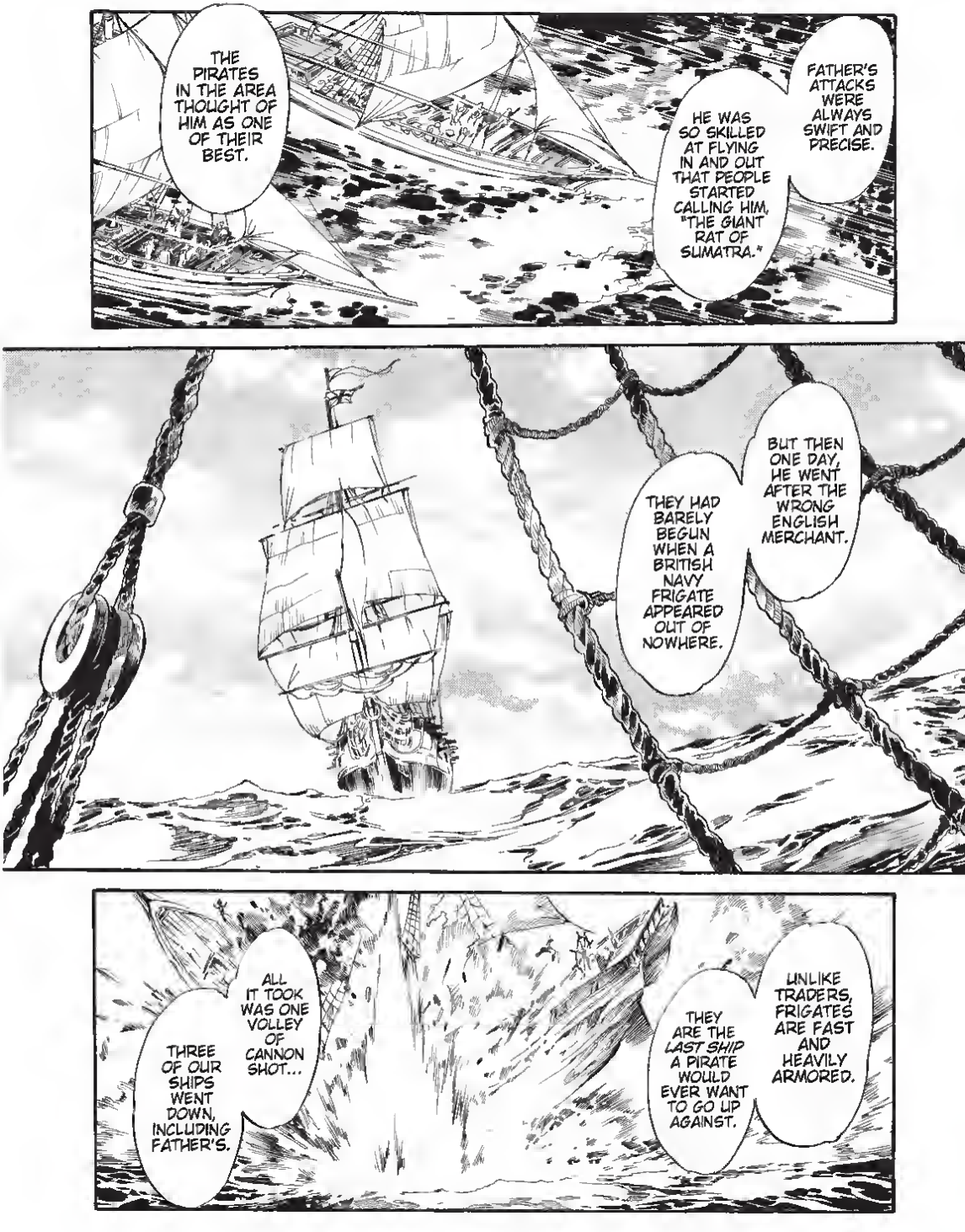
WELL, YOU SEE... MY FATHER OWES YOURS HIS LIFE.


UNTIL FIVE YEARS AGO, FATHER WAS A PIRATE.
HE ROVED UP AND DOWN THE STRAIT OF MALACCA.
HE WOULD TARGET MERCHANT SHIPS AND TRADERS FROM HOLLAND, PORTUGAL ...
AND, OF COURSE, ENGLAND.


FATHER'S STRATEGY WAS A SIMPLE ONE. HE HAD A SMALL FLEET OF FAST BOATS.
HE WOULD OUTMANEUVER THE BIGGER TRADING VESSELS, BOARD 'EM, ROB 'EM, AND RUN.
HE ONLY EVER TOOK MONEY AND CARGO, THOUGH. NEVER HOSTAGES.


TRIED AS HARD AS HE COULD NEVER TO SHED BLOOD...
AND HE HAD AN IRONCLAD RULE THAT HIS MEN WERE NEVER TO LAY HANDS ON ANY LADY PASSENGERS.

KERSPLAAASH!
THE CULPRIT'S HEAD WOULD BE CUT OFF AND HURLED IN THE SEA.
AND IF THAT RULE WAS BRO-KEN ...?
It was chop-chop...


THE PIRATES IN THE AREA THOUGHT OF HIM AS ONE OF THEIR BEST.
FATHER'S ATTACKS WERE ALWAYS SWIFT AND PRECISE.
HE WAS SO SKILLED AT FLYING IN AND OUT THAT PEOPLE STARTED CALLING HIM, "THE GIANT RAT OF SUMATRA."
BUT THEN ONE DAY, HE WENT AFTER THE WRONG ENGLISH MERCHANT.
THEY HAD BARELY BEGUN WHEN A BRITISH NAVY FRIGATE APPEARED OUT OF NOWHERE.
UNLIKE TRADERS, FRIGATES ARE FAST AND HEAVILY ARMORED.
THEY ARE THE *LAST SHIP* A PIRATE WOULD EVER WANT TO GO UP AGAINST.
ALL IT TOOK WAS ONE VOLLEY OF CANNON SHOT...
THREE OF OUR SHIPS WENT DOWN, INCLUDING FATHER'S.

THE FRIGATE'S CAPTAIN HAD THEM HAULED UP OUT OF THE SEA.
THAT CAPTAIN WAS YOUR FATHER.
EEE! I ALWAYS *KNEW* FATHER WAS A HEROIC MAN!!
HE TOLD ME ONCE THAT HE USED TO BE AN OFFICER IN THE NAVY.
NOW, ENGLISH LAW HOLDS THAT CAPTURED PIRATES ARE EXECUTED ON THE SPOT.
SO FATHER TOLD ME HE WAS PREPARED FOR THE CHOPPING BLOCK.
SO YOU'RE "THE GIANT RAT OF SUMATRA." I LIKE THAT LOOK IN YOUR EYES.
LEAVE THE PLEASANTRIES. IF YOU ARE GOING TO KILL ME, DO IT AND HAVE DONE.

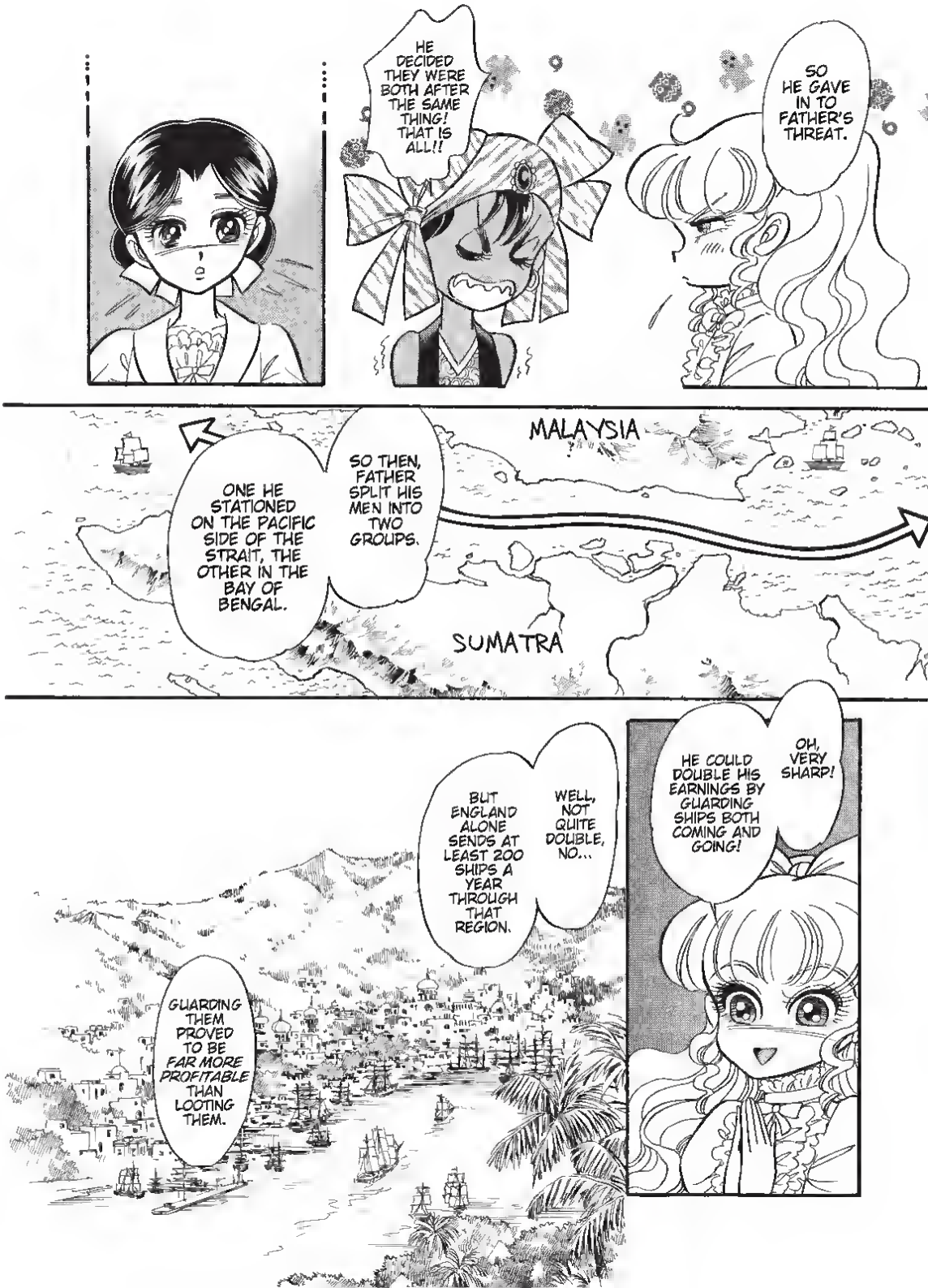
COME NOW. NO NEED TO BE RASH.
FROM WHAT I HEAR, YOU HAVE A SORT OF HONOR ABOUT YOU. YOU DO NOT KILL OR TAKE HOSTAGES.
I HAVE ALSO HEARD THAT YOU SHARE A THIRD OF YOUR SPOILS WITH POOR VILLAGERS.
IN WAR I WILL, BUT IF NOT, NO. I SEE NO POINT IN SPILLING UNNECESSARY BLOOD.
AND TAKING HOSTAGES IS MORE TROUBLE THAN IT'S WORTH, WITH THE SETTING UP OF RANSOMS AND ALL.
NOT JUST VILLAGERS.
THE MAHARAJA IS RICH, AND *EVERYBODY ELSE* IS POOR AS THE DIRT.
I SEE.
WELL THEN, I THINK WE HAVE ROOM FOR NEGOTIA-TION.

WHAT ?!
YOU WILL CEASE YOUR PIRACY AT ONCE.
IN RETURN, I WILL MAKE YOU A BRITISH PRIVATEER. HOW DOES THAT SOUND?
ARE YOU MAD?!
IT IS PRIVA-TEERS THAT TURN PIRATE ...
NOT THE OTHER BLOODY WAY AROUND*!
YOUR DUTY WOULD BE TO GUARD ANY ENGLISH TRADING VESSELS PASSING THROUGH THE STRAIT OF MALACCA.
THE NUMBER OF TRADE SHIPS PASSING THROUGH TO REACH HONG KONG AND JAPAN HAS BEEN GROWING YEAR AFTER YEAR.
OF COURSE, I WILL NOT ASK YOU TO DO IT FOR NOTHING.
I SHALL SEE TO IT YOU ARE PAID TEN POUNDS FOR EACH SHIP YOU ESCORT.

*Many pirates from the Golden Age of piracy actually started out as privateers, with their sovereign nation turning a blind eye to their activities, as long as they only robbed from that nation's enemies

BUT IF YOU REFUSE... WELL, I WILL BE FORCED TO EXECUTE YOU ALL ON THE SPOT.
FURTHER-MORE, SHOULD YOU ACCEPT THIS BARGAIN ...
I WILL HAVE YOUR RECORD OF PIRACY ERASED.
I CANNOT BELIEVE THIS!
WHAT?! THIS IS NO "NEGOTIA-TION"!
IT IS A BALD-FACED THREAT!
THEN CAPTAIN HOPE SAID ONE THING THAT TRULY GOT FATHER'S ATTENTION.
HOW BEASTLY OF FATHER!
WELL, THERE IS DEFINITELY A FAMILY RESEM-BLANCE ...

MR KAYIRHAN. IN ORDER TO PROTECT OUR SHIPS AND OUR SAILORS, I AM ATTEMPTING TO BRIBE A PIRATE FOR PROTECTION.
IN DOING THIS, I HAVE THROWN AWAY ANY SCRAP OF PRIDE I MAY HAVE HAD AS AN ENGLISH GENTLEMAN.
WILL YOU NOT SWALLOW *YOUR* PRIDE TO HELP THE POOR FOLK OF YOUR VILLAGE?
SPLOOSH
SHIVA'S BREATH! I HAVE BEEN SNARED BY A STRANGE ONE, INDEED.
BUT I LIKE THE WAY YOU THINK.


SO HE GAVE IN TO FATHER'S THREAT.
HE DECIDED THEY WERE BOTH AFTER THE SAME THING! THAT IS ALL!!
MALAYSIA
SUMATRA
SO THEN, FATHER SPLIT HIS MEN INTO TWO GROUPS.
ONE HE STATIONED ON THE PACIFIC SIDE OF THE STRAIT, THE OTHER IN THE BAY OF BENGAL.
OH, VERY SHARP!
HE COULD DOUBLE HIS EARNINGS BY GUARDING SHIPS BOTH COMING AND GOING!
WELL, NOT QUITE DOUBLE, NO...
BUT ENGLAND ALONE SENDS AT LEAST 200 SHIPS A YEAR THROUGH THAT REGION.
GUARDING THEM PROVED TO BE *FAR MORE PROFITABLE* THAN LOOTING THEM.

WITH ALL THE MONEY HE EARNED, THE VILLAGE WAS ABLE NOT ONLY TO DIG WELLS FOR CLEAN WATER, BUT THEY COULD BUILD STURDY BRIDGES AND ROADS, TOO.
THEIR LIVES WERE NO LONGER DESPERATELY POOR, AS THEY HAD SOME COMFORT IN THEM.
YES. BETTER INFRASTRUCTURE MEANS A BETTER FLOW OF GOODS, WHICH CAN BRING MORE WEALTH TO AN AREA.
ALAS, SOME PEOPLE WERE NOT HAPPY ABOUT THAT.
OR, I SHOULD SAY, ONE MAN...
MAHARAJA JAHANA.
HE'S THE ONE SENDING THE THUGGEE AFTER YOU.

YOU SEE, MOST MAHARAJAS HAVE THEIR OWN PERSONAL THUGGEE BANDS.
THEY USE THEM TO GET RID OF RIVALS AND USELESS SUBORDI-NATES.
INDIA
MASTER HOPE HAS BEEN TRYING TO DISBAND THE THUGGEE, ALL THROUGHOUT INDIA.
YES!
SO FATHER HAS EARNED THE ENMITY OF MAHARAJA JAHANA?
BUT JAHANA WAS NOT ONE OF THOSE.
SO WHY KEEP OLD-FASHIONED ASSASSIN BANDS, WHEN THERE ARE BETTER WAYS TO TRADE AND GOVERN?
NOW, SOME OF THE MAHARAJAS LIKED THE IDEA. THEY SEE THAT THE WORLD IS CHANGING...

WHAT?!
ARE THESE ASSASSINS AFTER FATHER AND MOTHER, AND EVEN LITTLE ALEX, TOO?!
EXACTLY. JAHANA WANTS TO MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF MASTER HOPE AND HIS FAMILY.
BY TAKING YOU DOWN, HE'S TRYING TO BRING BACK THE OLD, DARK DAYS, WHERE THUGGEE ASSASSINS LURKED IN EVERY CORNER.
AND IF HE MANAGES TO KILL YOU *HERE* IN LONDON, THAT WILL DEMONSTRATE A HAND THAT REACHES AS FAR AS THE ENEMY'S CAPITAL CITY.
HEH. THE THUGGEE CAN TRY, BUT MASTER HOPE AND HIS FAMILY ARE BEING WATCHED BY OVER A HUNDRED OF FATHER'S BEST MEN. THEY'RE FINE.

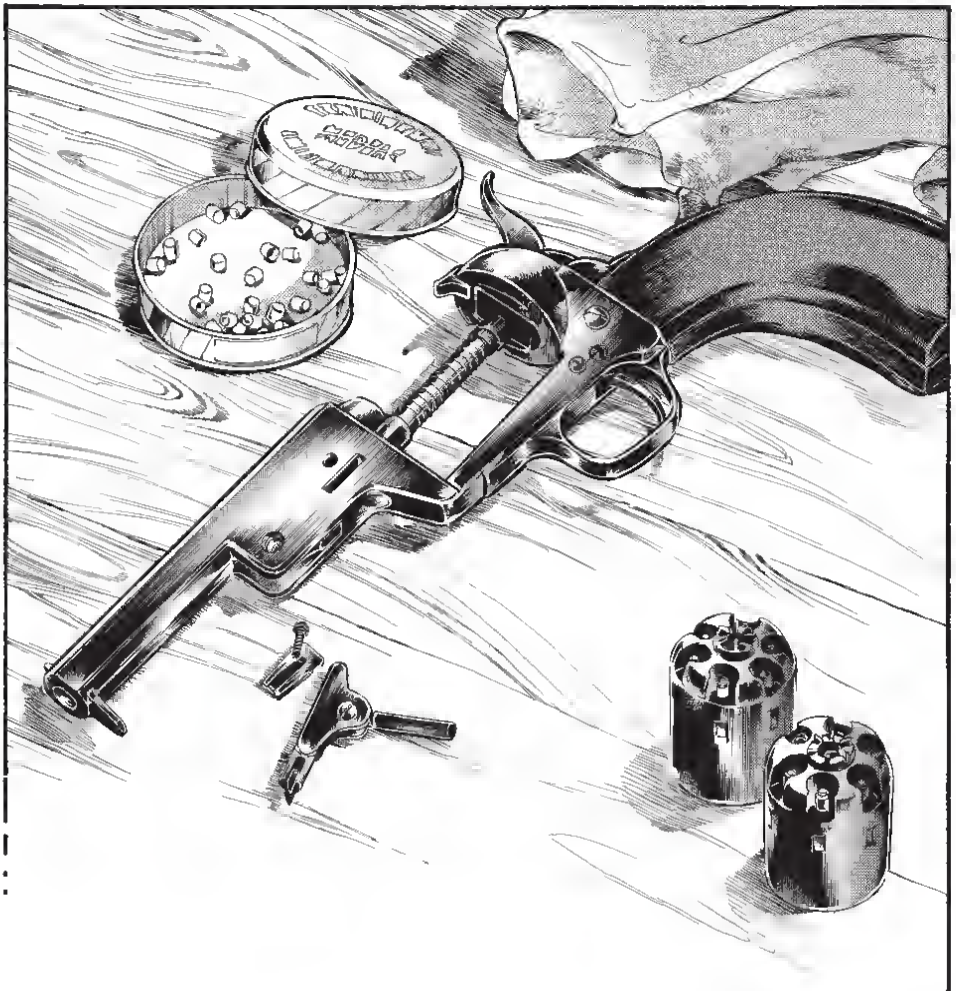
I SEE.
BUT SINCE THEY'RE ALL BUSY BACK IN INDIA, FATHER SENT *ME* TO WATCH OVER YOU HERE.
MEANWHILE, MY MEN AND I WILL SEARCH OUT AND ELIMINATE EVERY THUGGEE GROUP IN LONDON.
WE ONLY HAVE TO HOLD OUT UNTIL THEN.
NOW, MASTER HOPE AND HIS FAMILY WILL BE CLEAR OF INDIA IN ABOUT TEN DAYS.
HOW MANY THUGGEE GROUPS DO YOU BELIEVE ARE HERE?
IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY FOR SURE...
BUT EACH THUGGEE GROUP HAS THREE OR FOUR MEN. I THINK THERE HAVE TO BE ABOUT FIFTY IN ALL.
THAT WILL BE ONE *HUGE* BLACK EYE FOR HIM. NONE OF THE OTHER MAHARAJAS WILL LISTEN TO HIM AFTER THAT.
THAT MEANS JAHANA WILL FAIL, BOTH IN INDIA *AND* IN LONDON.

HA! YOUR POLICE ARE POWER-LESS AGAINST THEM.
GOOD HEAVENS! MY LADY, WE MUST INFORM THE POLICE!!
FIFTY MEN?!
WELL, I HAVE ALREADY SEEN A FEW LIKELY SPOTS. THEY WILL BE FOUND.
GOODNESS. IT SOUNDS LIKE QUITE THE DIFFICULT UNDER-TAKING.
YOUR FOLK WOULD NOT KNOW THE FIRST PLACE TO LOOK.
THUGGEE CAN HIDE JUST ABOUT ANYWHERE, EVEN SEWER DRAINS!
I HAVE AN IDEA.
NADA, I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME YOU AND YOUR MEN AS GUESTS OF THIS HOUSE. WHILE YOU ARE HERE, NONE OF US SHALL SET FOOT OUTSIDE THE MANSION.

WHAT?! IF WE HAVE TO STAY HERE TO KEEP YOU IN, HOW DO YOU EXPECT US TO HUNT THE THUGGEE?
MY LADY!
BAM
LET'S MAKE THEM COME TO US.
THERE IS NO NEED TO GO SEARCHING FOR ANYTHING.
WE KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THE THUGGEE ARE AFTER--*ME*--AND WHERE TO FIND IT--*HERE*.
THE THUGGEE ATTACKED ME SOON AFTER I ENTERED THE PARK. THAT TIMING CANNOT HAVE BEEN MERE COINCIDENCE.
THEY MUST HAVE SOMEONE WATCHING EVERY MOVE I MAKE, WAITING FOR A CHANCE TO CATCH ME UNPROTECTED.

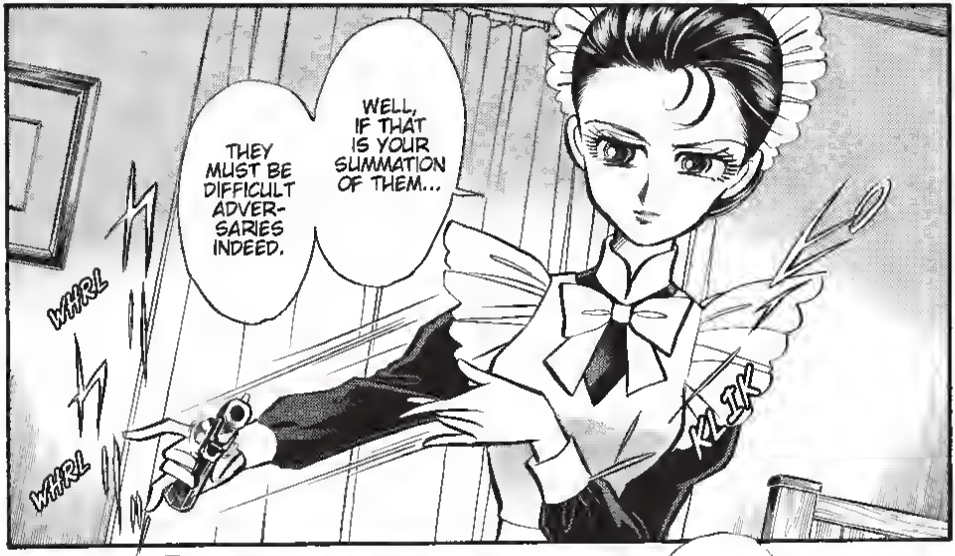
OH NO! WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
WHICH MEANS THAT AT THIS VERY MOMENT, THERE MUST BE A NUMBER OF THUGGEE WATCHING THIS HOUSE.
ABSO-LUTELY NOTHING.
IT WILL BE A TEN-DAY GAME OF ENDUR-ANCE.
IF WE FLINCH FIRST, WE WILL BE LOST.
YES, MY LADY?
JINGLE
MARK WHAT I AM ABOUT TO TELL YOU, AND PASS IT ALONG TO THE REST OF THE STAFF.

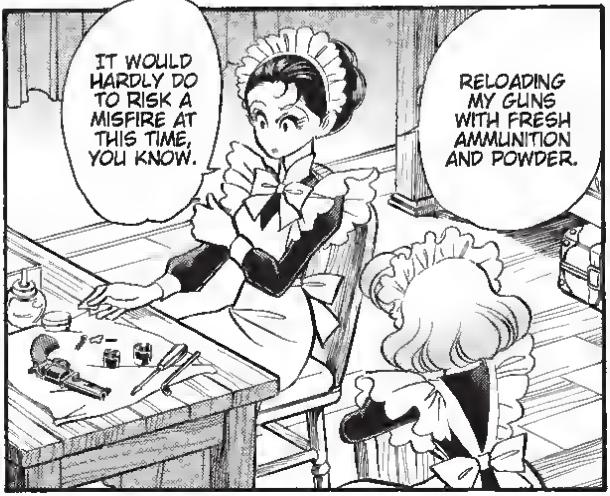
STARTING IMMEDIATELY, THE STAFF IS TO BE SPLIT INTO TWO SHIFTS, MORNING AND NIGHT.
THE MANSION IS TO BE KEPT BRIGHTLY LIT AT ALL TIMES, ESPECIALLY IN THE SMALL HOURS OF THE MORNING.
ALL WINDOWS MUST REMAIN LOCKED.
DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS, LIGHT CURTAINS WILL BE DRAWN ACROSS ALL WINDOWS, TO MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO SEE INSIDE.
RIGHT NOW, FATHER IS FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE IN INDIA.
AND I SHALL SEE THAT HIS FAMILY IS KEPT SAFE IN LONDON!

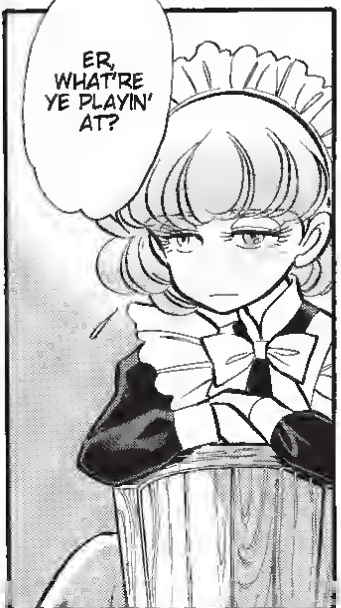


The Adventure of The Giant Rat of Sumatra (4)

I DIDN'T SEE NONE OF 'EM USING THROWING WEAPONS, BUT THEY'RE STILL RIGHT FIERCE.
QUICK AS SNAKES, TOO.
WOULDN'T WANT TO GO HAND-TO-HAND AGAINST NONE OF 'EM.


WELL, IF THAT IS YOUR SUMMATION OF THEM...
THEY MUST BE DIFFICULT ADVER-SARIES INDEED.
WHIRL
WHIRL
KLIK


RELOADING MY GUNS WITH FRESH AMMUNITION AND POWDER.
IT WOULD HARDLY DO TO RISK A MISFIRE AT THIS TIME, YOU KNOW.

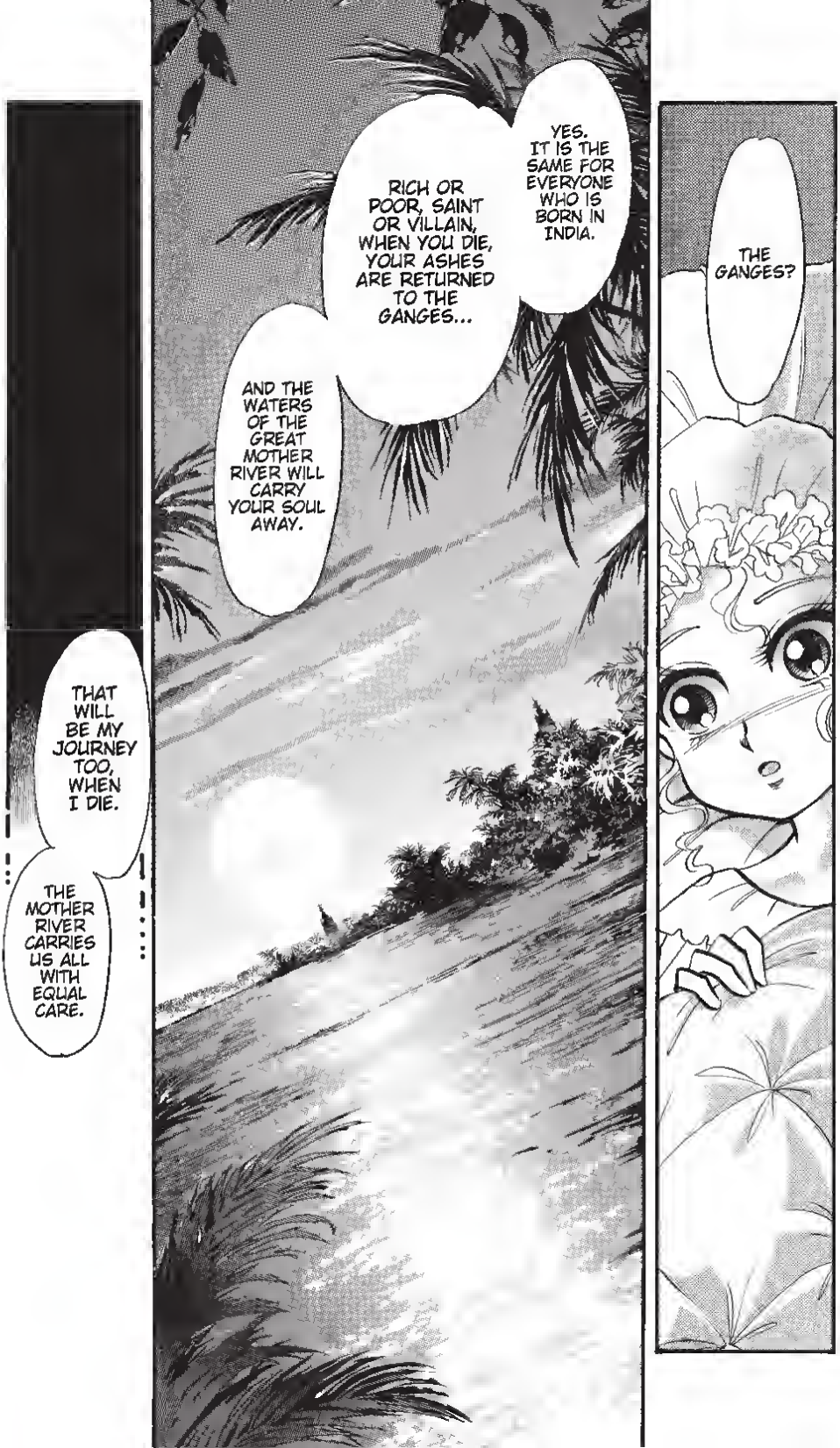

ER, WHAT'RE YE PLAYIN' AT?

I DO HAVE A SPARE RIFLE, IF YOU'D LIKE TO USE IT.
YOU WOULD NEED TO BUY BULLETS FOR IT, HOWEVER.
HUH. WELL, THERE'S NO FEAR OF MISFIRES WITH MY WHIP...
BUT USING IT IN THE NARROW HALLWAYS IN THIS PLACE'LL BE A RIGHT BOTHER.
EH? WHY? CAN'T IT USE THE BULLETS YOU HAVE NOW?
RIFLES USE CARTRIDGES, NOT STANDARD PISTOL ROUNDS.
BESIDES, WHAT I HAVE HERE ARE SPECIAL PERCUSSION ROUNDS. THE CALIBER IS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT.
HMPH... WHAT FIDDLY, FUSSY WEAPONS GUNS ARE.
NEVER MIND THAT NOW. DO YOU TRUST THIS INDIAN GIRL? "NADA," WAS IT?

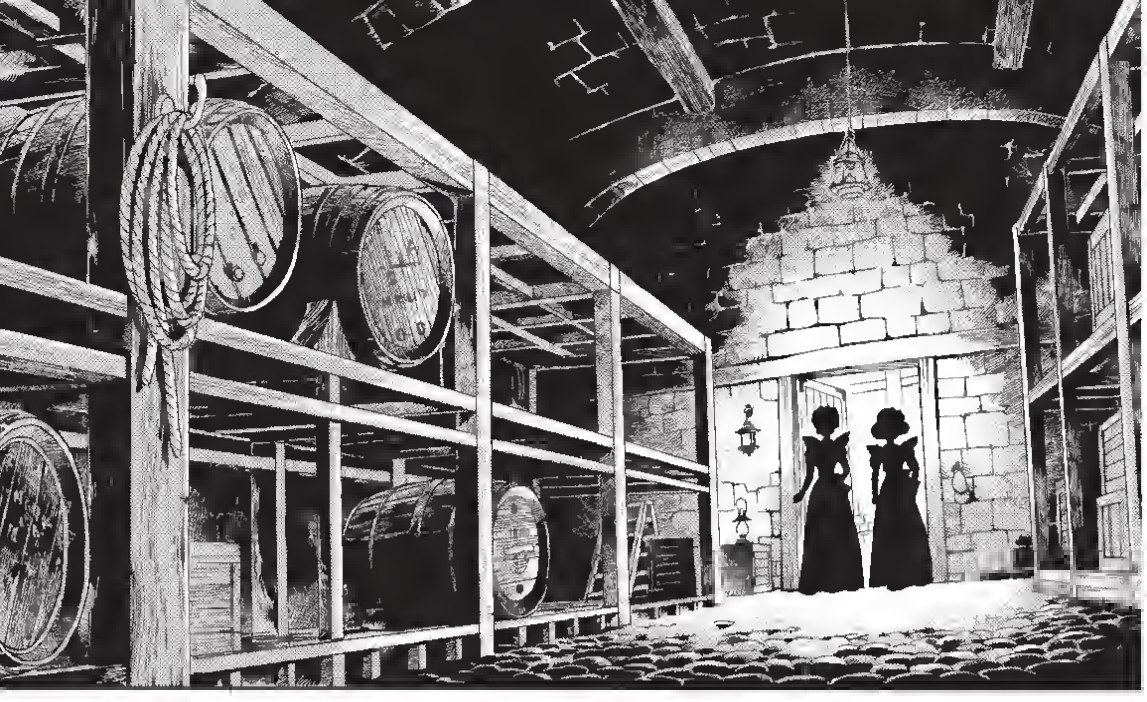
YES, THEY DO.
DO ALL ENGLISH PRINCESSES WEAR SUCH GARMENTS TO SLEEP?!
OOOOH! SO MANY FRILLS AND FURBELOWS!!
AND AS YOU ARE AN INDIAN PRINCESS OF A SORT, YOU MAY WEAR IT TO SLEEP AS WELL.
N-NO! WAIT! THAT ISN'T PROPER FOR GENTLEMEN TO SEE--!
WHA?!
JUST LET KUGA AND GANDA GET AN EYEFUL OF THIS!
?
HUZZAH! She IS a girl!! HUZZAH!
JUST AS I SUS-PECTED ...
HAR HAR HAR HAR HAR

WOULD YOU TELL ME ABOUT INDIA?
NADA?
HMM? WELL, WE HAVE TWO SEASONS. THE RAINY SEASON, AND THE DRY SEASON.
THE SOUTH IS HOT ALL YEAR ROUND, BUT SOME PLACES UP IN THE NORTH HAVE SNOW.
MOST PEOPLE ARE GOOD, HONEST FOLK, TRYING AS HARD AS THEY CAN TO GET BY.
MANY ARE BORN, AND MANY DIE.
.....

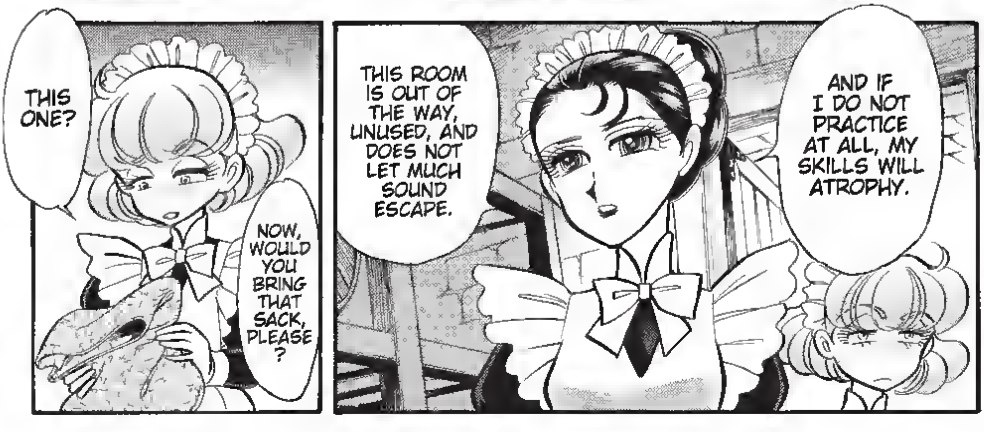
IS IT DIFFICULT FOR PEOPLE TO SURVIVE THERE?
NO, THAT IS NOT HOW I MEANT IT.
THERE'S PLENTY THAT MAKES LIFE WORTH LIVING, SO EVERYONE TRIES AS HARD AS THEY CAN.
EVEN IF IT'S REALLY HARD?
IT MAY BE HARD TODAY ...
BUT TOMORROW MIGHT BRING TREMENDOUS JOY.
YOU LIVE AS WELL AS YOU CAN, AND WHEN YOU DIE, YOU ARE RETURNED TO THE GANGES.


THE GANGES?
YES. IT IS THE SAME FOR EVERYONE WHO IS BORN IN INDIA.
RICH OR POOR, SAINT OR VILLAIN, WHEN YOU DIE, YOUR ASHES ARE RETURNED TO THE GANGES...
AND THE WATERS OF THE GREAT MOTHER RIVER WILL CARRY YOUR SOUL AWAY.
THAT WILL BE MY JOURNEY TOO, WHEN I DIE.
THE MOTHER RIVER CARRIES US ALL WITH EQUAL CARE.

I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WERE HIDDEN ROOMS IN THE MANSION.
WELL I'LL B....
JINGLE
KLIK
KLAK
YES, ONLY A FEW PEOPLE KNOW OF THIS ONE.
MR. BENSON, MADAM CONNERY, MYSELF... AND NOW, YOU.
WATCH YOUR STEP, PLEASE. THE FOOTING CAN BE UNCERTAIN IN HERE.
IT WAS ONCE A WINE CELLAR, BUT IT IS NO LONGER IN USE.
KLUNK



LAWKS!
SO THIS IS YOUR SECRET TRAINING GROUND, EH?
WELL, I CAN HARDLY PRACTICE IN THE GARDEN, NOW CAN I?

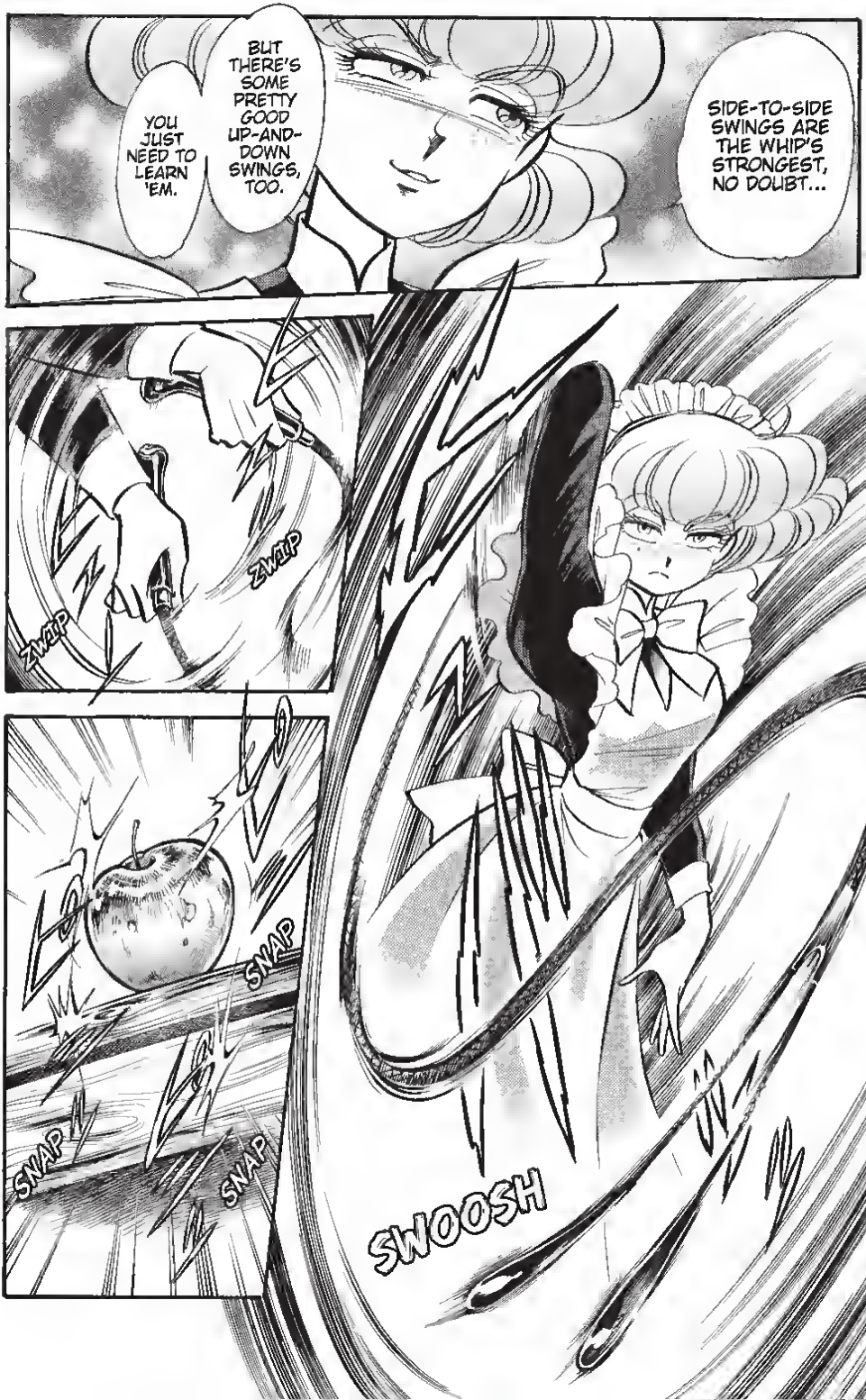

AND IF I DO NOT PRACTICE AT ALL, MY SKILLS WILL ATROPHY.
THIS ROOM IS OUT OF THE WAY, UNUSED, AND DOES NOT LET MUCH SOUND ESCAPE.
THIS ONE?
NOW, WOULD YOU BRING THAT SACK, PLEASE?

EH? ROTTEN APPLES?
THOSE ARE MY TARGETS.
DON'T FORGET TO REMOVE THE COTTON BATTING, AS WELL.
TAKE A TUFT OF THAT AND WAD IT UP INTO A SMALL BALL.
THEN PUT A BALL IN EACH OF YOUR EARS GOOD AND TIGHT, OTHERWISE THE GUN-SHOTS MAY DEAFEN YOU.
NOW, LET US BEGIN.

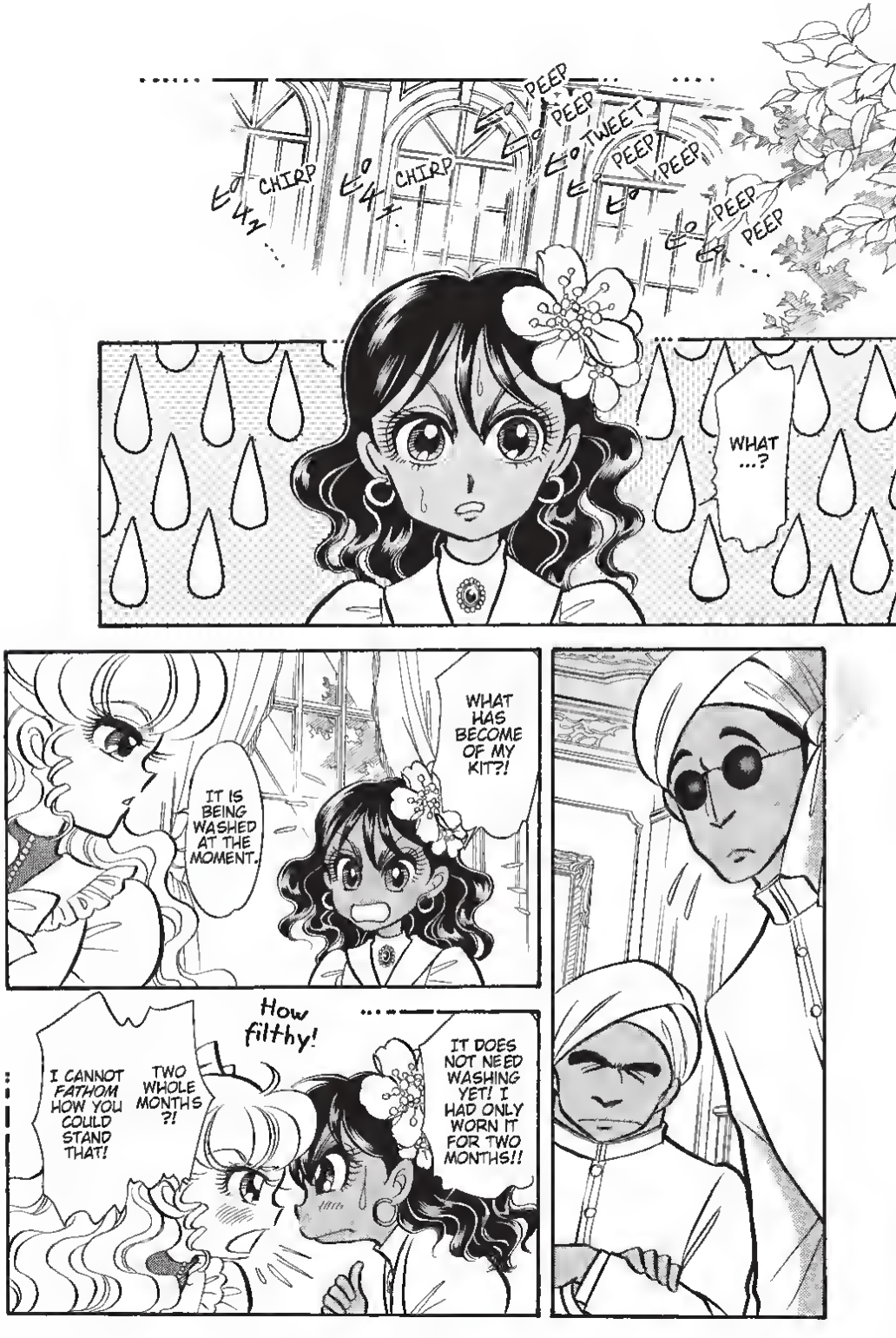
KLIK
BLAM
BLAM

LAWKS!
COR! REMIND ME NEVER TO MAKE YOU PULL ONE OF THEM THINGS ON ME!
I WILL TAKE THAT AS A COMPLIMENT, THANK YOU.
MY NEXT ATTEMPT WILL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THE SMOKE CLEARS.
DRAT!
.....
WHILE THIS ROOM IS PERFECT FOR DAMPENING THE NOISE, IT DOES HAVE ITS PROBLEMS.
THE WORST IS THE SMOKE.
IT TAKES SO TERRIBLY LONG TO CLEAR.

I THOUGHT YOU DID NOT CARRY A GUN.
RECKON I'LL HAVE A GO WHILE WE WAIT.
NAY, I'LL JUST USE WHAT I KNOW BEST. THIS.
AND IT DON'T PUT OUT NO SMOKE.
WSH
DIFFICULT, AYE. IMPOS-SIBLE? NAY.
NOT IF YOU USE IT RIGHT.
I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOUR WHIP WAS DIFFICULT TO USE IN NARROW SPACES?


SIDE-TO-SIDE SWINGS ARE THE WHIP'S STRONGEST, NO DOUBT...
BUT THERE'S SOME PRETTY GOOD UP-AND-DOWN SWINGS, TOO.
YOU JUST NEED TO LEARN 'EM.
ZWIP
ZWIP
SNAP
SNAP
SNAP
SWOOSH

WATCH NOW.
OH NO! IT LOOKS LIKE YOU MISSED.
SPOK
EEK!
I did it!
Ha ha ha!
SEE?
GOODNESS! I CANNOT TURN MY BACK ON YOU, CAN I?
NYA HA HA HA HA!
AND I'LL TAKE THAT AS A COMPLIMENT, THANKS!

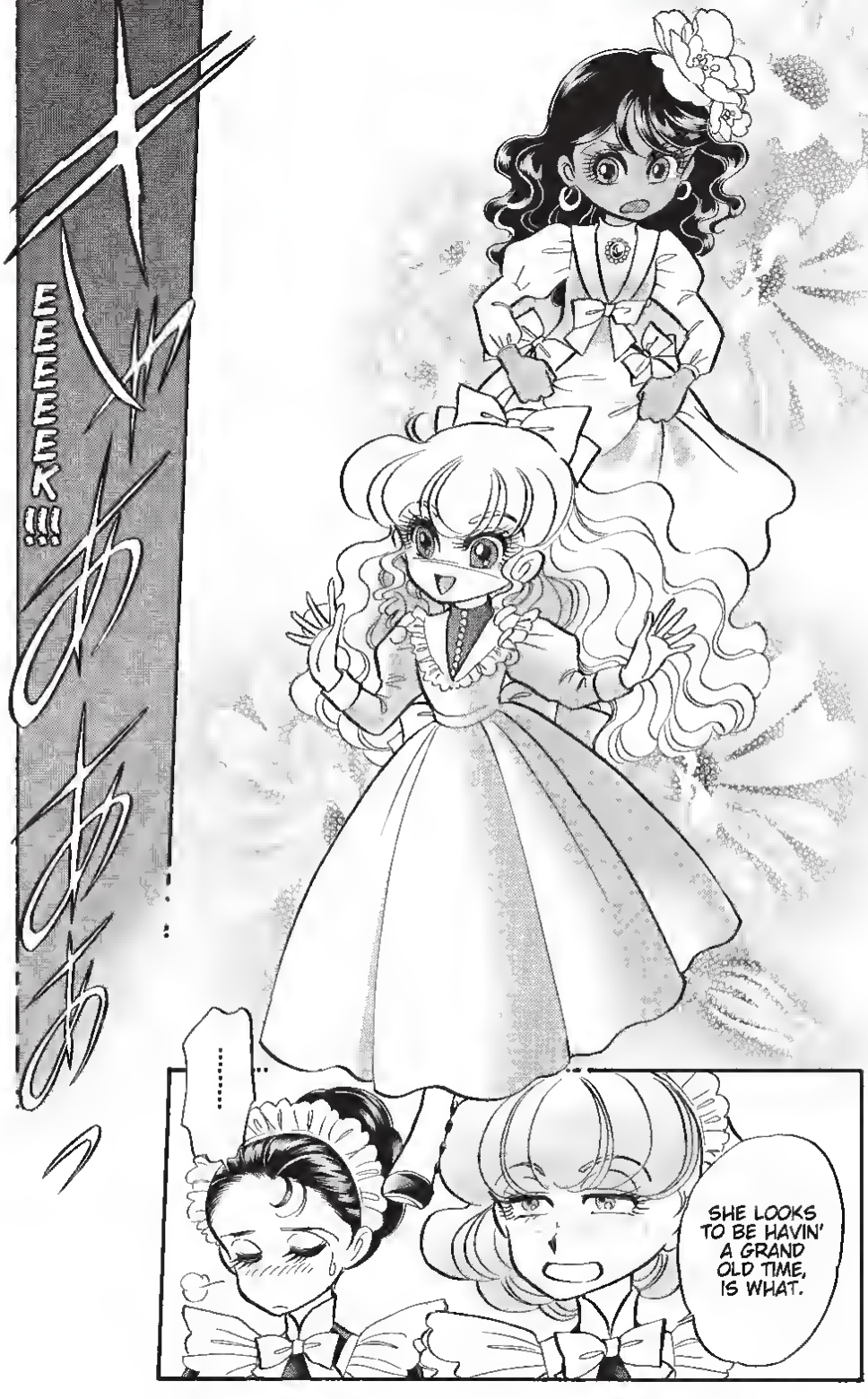

CHIRP
CHIRP
PEEP
PEEP
TWEET
PEEP
PEEP
PEEP
PEEP
WHAT ...?
WHAT HAS BECOME OF MY KIT?!
IT IS BEING WASHED AT THE MOMENT.
How filthy!
I CANNOT FATHOM HOW YOU COULD STAND THAT!
TWO WHOLE MONTHS ?!
IT DOES NOT NEED WASHING YET! I HAD ONLY WORN IT FOR TWO MONTHS!!

LISTEN, NADA.
YOU HAVE BEEN SENT HERE TO LONDON TO PROTECT ME, CORRECT?
THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY TO DO SO IS TO STAY CLOSE TO ME.
AND IF YOU ARE TO STAY CLOSE TO ME, I WILL SEE THAT YOU ARE DRESSED APPROPRIATELY.
GANDA! KUGA!!
YOU TELL THE GIRL I CANNOT WEAR THIS!
WELL, RAANI...
I CANNOT FIGHT IN THIS!!
BUT THIS IS...ALL FRILLS AND FURBELOWS!
WELL, I THINK IT LOOKS QUITE LOVELY ON YOU.
YOUR FIRST DUTY IS TO SEE TO THE PRINCESS' PROTECTION, YES?
I BELIEVE THIS PLAN OF STAYING CLOSE AS A PERSONAL GUARD IS A VERY WISE ONE.
IT IS ONE ONLY YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH, RAANI.

WHY, THANK YOU, MR. GANDA. MR. KUGA. THAT IS VERY GENTLE-MANLY OF YOU.
AND I SUSPECT THE PRINCESS WILL BE HAPPIER THIS WAY. HAVING TWO GREAT, SWEATY MEN AS BODYGUARDS WOULD HARDLY BE PLEASANT.
GANDA HAS A POINT, RAANI.
YOU ARE THE DAUGHTER OF THE FAMED PIRATE KAYIRHAN. SHOW THE WORLD THAT YOU CAN FIGHT, NO MATTER WHAT YOU WEAR.
IN THE END, RAANI, WE MUST ALL DO OUR DUTY. GRUMBLING ABOUT IT ACCOMPLISHES NOTHING.
HMPH ...

The Adventure of The Giant Rat of Sumatra (5)

I SUGGESTED AS MUCH TO LADY CHRISTIE MYSELF.
HOWEVER, SHE HAS INSISTED SHE WILL PROTECT THE LONDON HOPES.
WHAT?!
LADY CHRISTIE INTENDS TO CONFRONT THAT DASTARDLY BAND OF ASSASSINS *INSIDE THE MANOR*?!
WE MUST SUMMON THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY!
EVACUATE EVERYONE!!
MR. BENSON!
HRM ...
THIS IS QUITE THE TANGLE, ISN'T IT?
OUR OWN SITUATION IS WORRYING, YES...
BUT I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE MASTER AND HIS LADY IN INDIA AS WELL.
IT *IS* VERY WORRYING...
AT THE VERY LEAST, WE MUST DECIDE WHAT *WE* SHALL DO.
WHAT HAS LADY CHRISTIE CHOSEN TO DO?


EEEEEEK!!!
あああ
……
SHE LOOKS TO BE HAVIN' A GRAND OLD TIME, IS WHAT.

KLIK
SH
WHAT'S WRONG ?!
HAS IT BEGUN ?!
DASH

DOOOO
!!
THAT BIRD!
YAMMER
YAMMER
EEEK!!
IT'S HOR-RIBLE!!
DOOOO-DOOO-DOOOH
NELSON! DOWN, BOY!! HEEL!!
WOOF WOOF

MY LADY, PLEASE! HURRY INSIDE!!
NO!
THAT IS NO MONSTER. IT IS AMANDA'S PET DODO.
A MONSTER!
MY LADY!
KLIK
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL
IT'S ALL RIGHT, DODO. CALM DOWN, CALM DOWN!
WSH

DOOOO
SKGH
THAT'S A GOOD BIRD!
THIS MUST ALL SEEM VERY STRANGE, THAT'S ALL.
BUT NOTHING WILL HARM YOU. NOW, DID YOU ESCAPE FROM AMANDA'S? HOW DID YOU GET HERE?
DOOO
DOOO
IT IS ALL RIGHT, EVERY-ONE!
THERE IS NO NEED TO PANIC. HE IS A VERY GENTLE BIRD.
MISS!

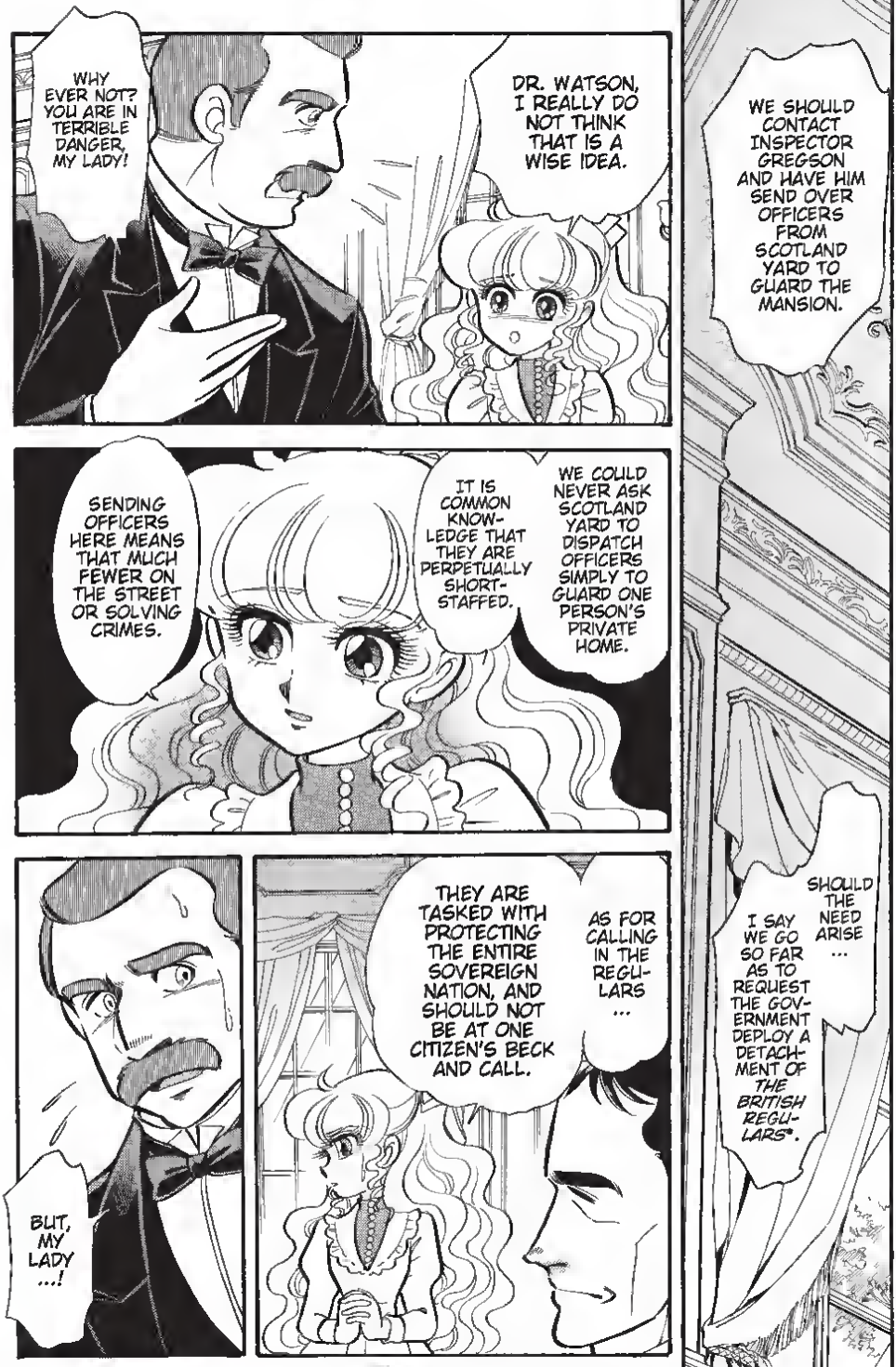
KH
DOOO
IT'S FROM AMANDA. LET'S SEE...
HM?
WHAT IS THIS...?
YOU HAVE A LETTER ON YOUR COLLAR.
TO MY DEAR FRIEND LADY CHRISTIE, I HAVE DECIDED TO SEND YOU YOUR GIFT EARLY.
I TRUST YOU WILL SOON BECOME A FEATHER-BRAINED NITWIT SOCIALITE.
YOURS, AMANDA
GOODNESS GRACIOUS! SUCH AN UNEXPECTED OUTBURST!
IT AIN'T, TRULY. BUT NO MATTER IF YOU DON'T WORK IT OUT, MISS GRACE.
BOOM
WHY THAT... THAT HARRIDAN !!!
HISSS

"FIVE APPLES.
"THREE HEADS OF CABBAGE. A DECENT QUANTITY OF CARROTS, BROCCOLI, OR OTHER VEGETABLES.
"DAILY FEEDING REQUIREMENTS...
"TWO POUNDS OF CORN, OATS, AND OTHER GRAINS.
WAIT, SHE HAS WRITTEN MORE.
SO, MISS ...
THAT THERE BIRD WAS A PRESENT FROM LADY AMANDA?
DOOO
DOOO
PLOP
"IF YOU ALLOW HIM TO ROAM LOOSE IN YOUR GARDEN, HE WILL SATISFY HIMSELF BY SNACKING ON WORMS AND INSECTS.
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
I SAY WE TURN IT INTO SUPPER.
NOTHING SAYIN' WE HAVE TO KEEP THIS FEATHER DUSTER, MISS.
WAIT, HE WILL WHAT ?!
"SHOULD HE GROW TOO HUNGRY, HE WILL CHARGE AT YOU UNTIL FED."
"HOWEVER, BE WARNED ..."

GOODNESS! THIS IS LESS A PRESENT FOR ME THAN IT IS AMANDA RIDDING HERSELF OF AN ANNOYANCE.
HOW ABSO-LUTELY LIKE HER
I HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE *THAT* IN INDIA.
IT IS NOT SOMETHING TYPICALLY SEEN IN LONDON, EITHER.
CHRISTIE... IS THAT HUGE CREATURE A BIRD?
YES.
IT IS CALLED A "DODO." IT IS A BIRD THAT WAS BELIEVED TO HAVE GONE EXTINCT CENTURIES AGO.
DOO
DOOO
KROAK
DOOO
FWUFF
FWUFF
MY LADY, I SUGGEST WE SEND A MES-SENGER TO THE HARRIET FAMILY.
IT IS ONLY PROPER THAT THEY TAKE THIS... *CREATURE* BACK.
THAT WOULD OPEN US UP TO INSULT FROM THEM.
THEY WOULD PLAY IT AS THOUGH WE ARE INCAPABLE OF CARING FOR A MERE BIRD.
THAT'S NO "MERE BIRD," MISS. NOT BY A LONG SHOT.

OH MY! NADA, DO YOU LIKE HIM?
DOOO
DOOO
I DO!
HE IS A GREAT, FLUFFY DEAR!
WELL THEN, LET US KEEP HIM.
WILL WE BE NAMIN' THE THING?
AMANDA CALLED HIM "DODO," BECAUSE HE IS A DODO BIRD.
THAT SEEMS NICE AND SIMPLE.
MORE LIKE SIMPLE-MINDED!

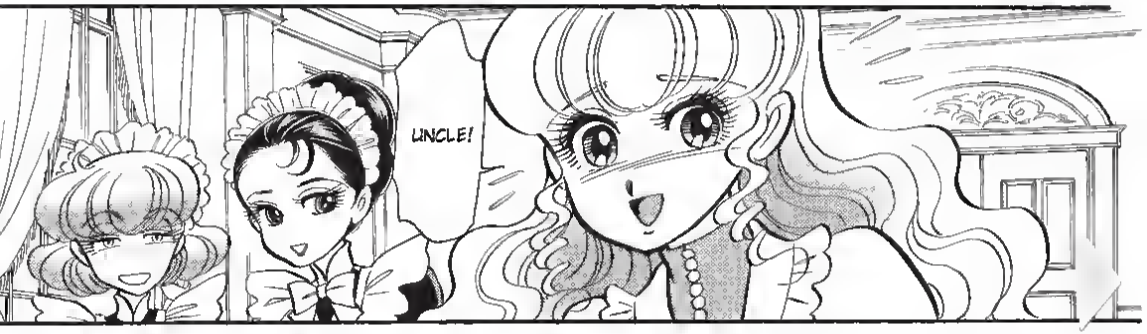
SOME-ONE IS HERE?
?
CLOP
CLOP
CHRIS-TIE.
GREAT SCOTT!
WHAT IS THAT ENOR-MOUS BIRD?!
DOOOOO
HOLMES!
SO THE SITUATION IS, IN FACT, FAR MORE DIRE THAN MY INVESTIGATION HAD SUGGESTED.
I SEE...


WHY EVER NOT? YOU ARE IN TERRIBLE DANGER, MY LADY!
DR. WATSON, I REALLY DO NOT THINK THAT IS A WISE IDEA.
WE SHOULD CONTACT INSPECTOR GREGSON AND HAVE HIM SEND OVER OFFICERS FROM SCOTLAND YARD TO GUARD THE MANSION.
SENDING OFFICERS HERE MEANS THAT MUCH FEWER ON THE STREET OR SOLVING CRIMES.
IT IS COMMON KNOW-LEDGE THAT THEY ARE PERPETUALLY SHORT-STAFFED.
WE COULD NEVER ASK SCOTLAND YARD TO DISPATCH OFFICERS SIMPLY TO GUARD ONE PERSON'S PRIVATE HOME.
BUT, MY LADY ...!
THEY ARE TASKED WITH PROTECTING THE ENTIRE SOVEREIGN NATION, AND SHOULD NOT BE AT ONE CITIZEN'S BECK AND CALL.
AS FOR CALLING IN THE REGU-LARS ...
I SAY WE GO SO FAR AS TO REQUEST THE GOV-ERNMENT DEPLOY A DETACH-MENT OF THE BRITISH REGU-LARS*.
SHOULD THE NEED ARISE ...

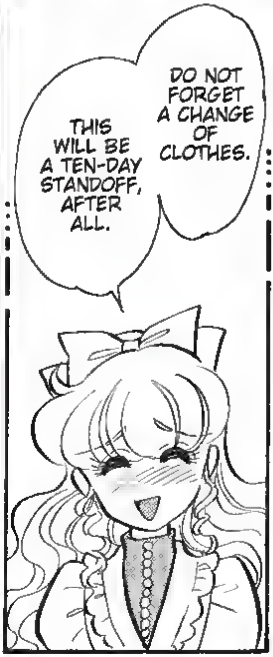
*The British Regulars was a term used for the British Army in the late 19th century

BESIDES, WE ARE NOT UNPROTECTED.
WE HAVE NADA, HER GUARDS, AND OUR OWN HERCULEAN MAIDS STANDING DEFENSE.
WHAT MISS CHRISTIE HAS SAID IS ENTIRELY CORRECT, WATSON.
AND MOREOVER ...
I RATHER FANCY OUR OPPONENT IS *HOPING* FOR A PUBLIC FUSS.
HOLMES!
THERE IS ENTIRELY TOO MUCH PRESTIGE AT STAKE IN THIS SITUATION.
SCOTLAND YARD AND THE BRITISH REGULARS CANNOT BE SEEN AS DANCING FOR A PACK OF INDIAN ROGUES.
IT WOULD *EMBARRASS* THE ENTIRE NATION.
WELL, I... THAT IS...

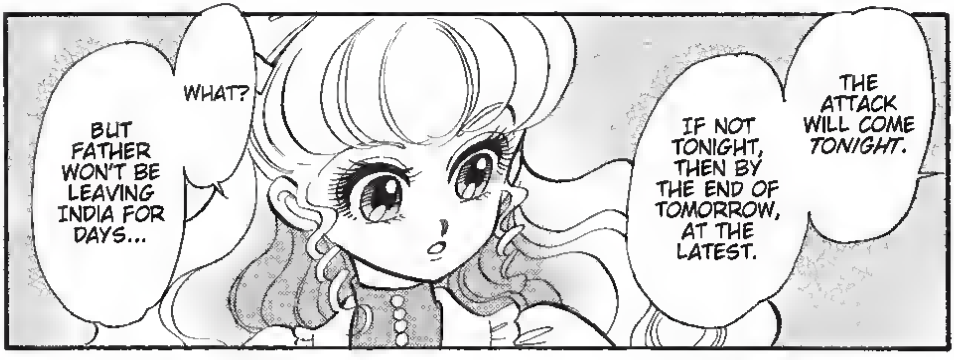
I AM NOT TRYING TO DIMINISH THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION. YES, WE HAVE A PAIR OF TRULY HERCULEAN MAIDS TO SERVE AS GUARDS.
WE ALSO HAVE A GANG OF PRIVATEERS, WHO ARE SPECIALISTS AT FIGHTING THUGGEE. HOWEVER, OUR OPPONENT CARES NAUGHT FOR ITS LOSSES.
I SUGGEST WE STAY HERE FOR THE NIGHT AND LEND WHAT AID WE MAY.

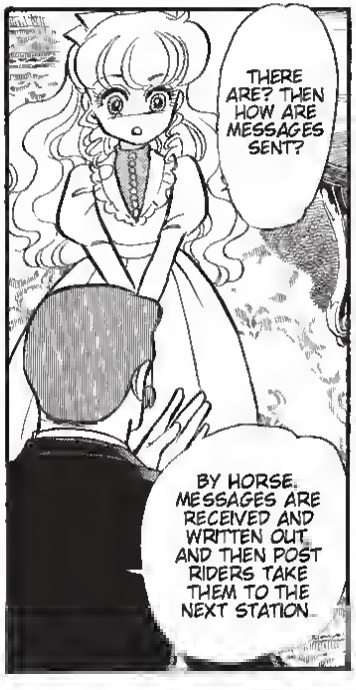

UNCLE!

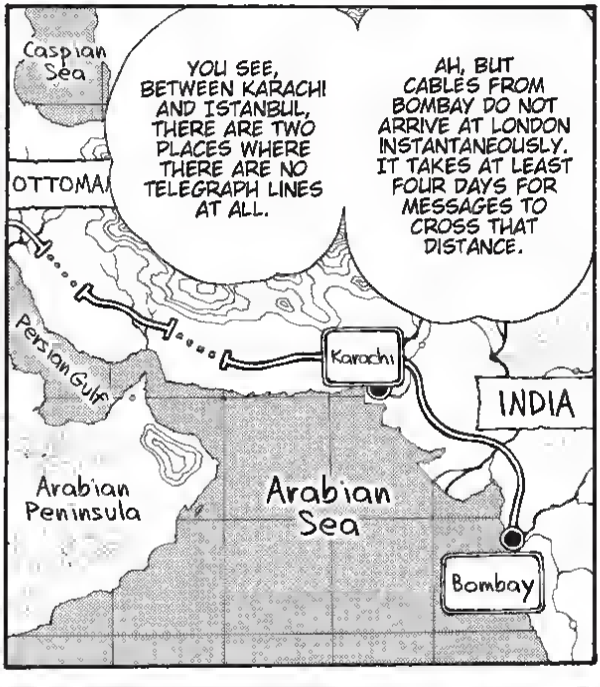
FOR THE MOMENT, WATSON, LET US RETURN TO THE OFFICE AND PACK.
WE WILL NEED WEA-PONS.
VERY TRUE.

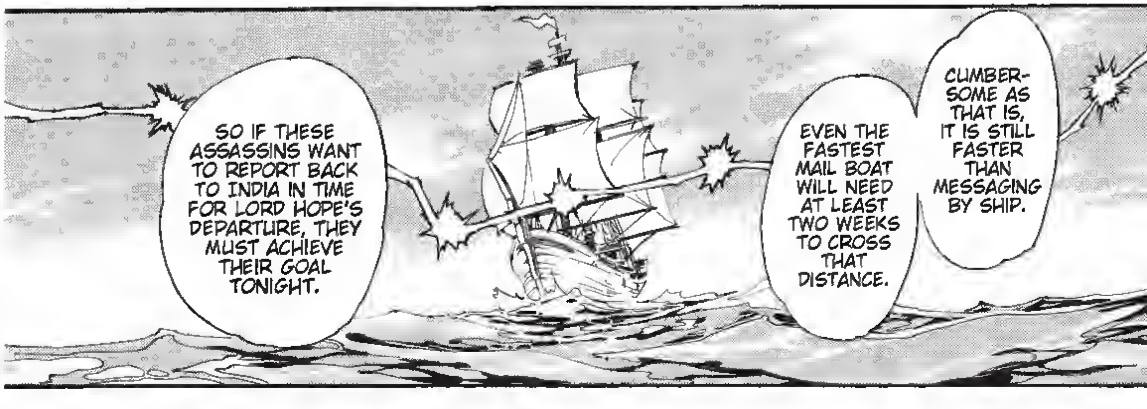

DO NOT FORGET A CHANGE OF CLOTHES.
THIS WILL BE A TEN-DAY STANDOFF, AFTER ALL.

TEN DAYS?
OH, HARDLY.

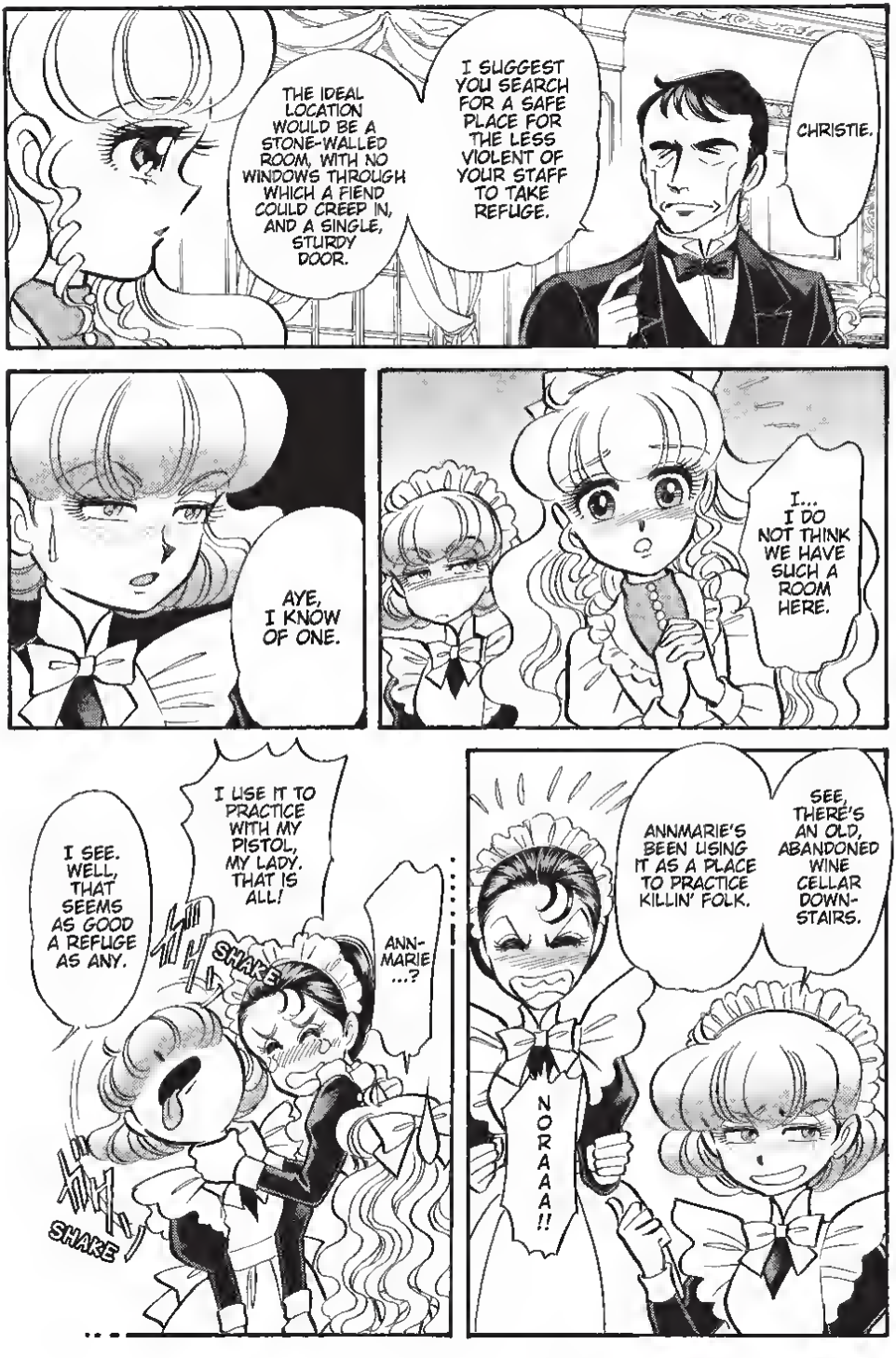

WHAT?
BUT FATHER WON'T BE LEAVING INDIA FOR DAYS...
IF NOT TONIGHT, THEN BY THE END OF TOMORROW, AT THE LATEST.
THE ATTACK WILL COME TONIGHT.


THERE ARE? THEN HOW ARE MESSAGES SENT?
BY HORSE. MESSAGES ARE RECEIVED AND WRITTEN OUT AND THEN POST RIDERS TAKE THEM TO THE NEXT STATION.


Caspian Sea
OTTOMA
Persian Gulf
Karachi
INDIA
Arabian Peninsula
Arabian Sea
Bombay
YOU SEE, BETWEEN KARACHI AND ISTANBUL, THERE ARE TWO PLACES WHERE THERE ARE NO TELEGRAPH LINES AT ALL.
AH, BUT CABLES FROM BOMBAY DO NOT ARRIVE AT LONDON INSTANTANEOUSLY. IT TAKES AT LEAST FOUR DAYS FOR MESSAGES TO CROSS THAT DISTANCE.


SO IF THESE ASSASSINS WANT TO REPORT BACK TO INDIA IN TIME FOR LORD HOPE'S DEPARTURE, THEY MUST ACHIEVE THEIR GOAL TONIGHT.
EVEN THE FASTEST MAIL BOAT WILL NEED AT LEAST TWO WEEKS TO CROSS THAT DISTANCE.
CUMBERSOME AS THAT IS, IT IS STILL FASTER THAN MESSAGING BY SHIP.

I SHALL PROTECT YOU, EVEN IF IT MEANS MY LIFE!!
DO NOT WORRY. I WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN!
NADA ...
MY GOOD-NESS...!
NOW, IF I WERE THIS JAHANA FELLOW, I WOULD WANT TO PRESENT THE SITUATION AS DRAMATICALLY AS POSSIBLE.
I'D HAVE THE LETTER DELIVERED TO ALEXANDER AS HE IS BOARDING HIS SHIP, TELLING HIM TO BE CERTAIN TO VISIT HIS DAUGHTER'S GRAVE UPON RETURNING.
BE THAT AS IT MAY, WE MUST TAKE DECISIVE ACTION AT ONCE.


CHRISTIE.
I SUGGEST YOU SEARCH FOR A SAFE PLACE FOR THE LESS VIOLENT OF YOUR STAFF TO TAKE REFUGE.
THE IDEAL LOCATION WOULD BE A STONE-WALLED ROOM, WITH NO WINDOWS THROUGH WHICH A FIEND COULD CREEP IN, AND A SINGLE, STURDY DOOR.
I... I DO NOT THINK WE HAVE SUCH A ROOM HERE.
AYE, I KNOW OF ONE.
SEE, THERE'S AN OLD, ABANDONED WINE CELLAR DOWN-STAIRS.
ANNMARIE'S BEEN USING IT AS A PLACE TO PRACTICE KILLIN' FOLK.
NORAAA!!
ANN-MARIE ...?
I USE IT TO PRACTICE WITH MY PISTOL, MY LADY. THAT IS ALL!
I SEE. WELL, THAT SEEMS AS GOOD A REFUGE AS ANY.
SHAKE
SHAKE

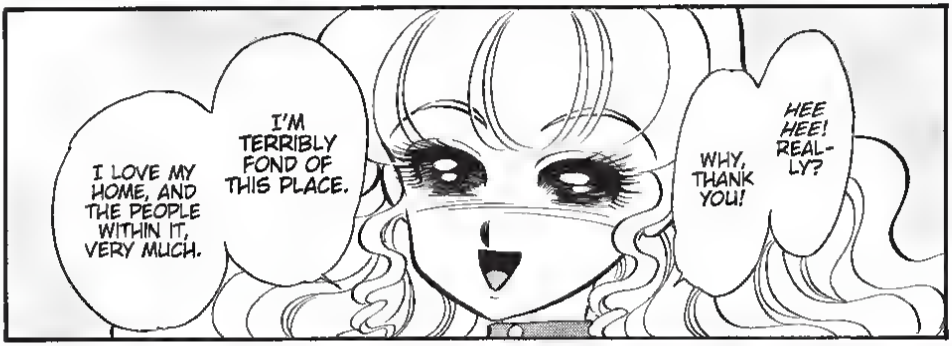
YES?
LADY CHRISTIE.
EXCEL-LENT! NOW, WATSON, WE OUGHT TO BE GOING.
I NOTICED A LARGE, PECULIAR BIRD IN YOUR GARDEN.
I CANNOT PLACE IT. WHAT MANNER OF BIRD IS IT?
OH, THAT IS MY DEAR FRIEND AMANDA'S GIFT TO ME.
IT IS A DODO BIRD.
SHE ACQUIRED IT AS A PET AFTER HER CANARY DIED.
A...DODO? ARE YOU CERTAIN? THE DODO BIRD WENT EXTINCT DURING THE 17TH CENTURY.
HOW COULD ONE BE LIVING IN LONDON, IN THIS DAY AND AGE?
ALIVE AND VERY HEAL-THY, TOO.

I CANNOT SAY HOW AMANDA CAME BY THE CREATURE, BUT IT SEEMS HE PROVED A BIT MUCH FOR HER HOUSEHOLD TO CARE FOR.
THUS SHE SENT HIM TO US.
DOOO
DOOO
HE IS A BIT OF A HANDFUL, YES, BUT I THINK WE SHALL GET ALONG NICELY.
WAT-SON!
I'M COMING, HOLMES!
IF THAT TRULY IS A DODO BIRD, HE WILL BE OF IMMEASUR-ABLE VALUE TO SCIENCE.
BY ALL RIGHTS, HE SHOULD BE SENT TO A ZOO.
HIS SPECIES AND HOW HE CAME TO BE HERE MATTERS LITTLE.
TO ME, DOCTOR, HE IS ALREADY A MEMBER OF MY FAMILY.
THUS, HIS HOME IS NOW HERE. NOT IN THE LONDON ZOO, OR IN A SCIENTIST'S LABORATORY.
.....

CLOP
CLOP
HE WAS SIMPLY IN THE WRONG PLACE, AT THE WRONG TIME... WHAT TERRIBLE MISFORTUNE.
SO IN THE END, LORD BEECHAM'S DEATH WAS LITTLE MORE THAN PRACTICE FOR THE THUGGEE.
TO THE THUGGEE, AND TO MANY INDIANS, ALL ENGLISHMEN ARE ENEMIES.
THE GREAT BRITISH EMPIRE HAS DONE POORLY BY HER COLONIES.
A RECKONING SHALL COME SOON, AND SHE WILL PAY FOR HER MISDEEDS, ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED.

IT SEEMS NELSON HAS GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO HIM.
DOOO
DOO DOO DOO
Oh, how dear!
AHA HA! LOOK HOW EAGER HE IS TO GET THOSE VEGETABLE SCRAPS.
PSCH!
OH! THERE'S EMILY, OUR COOK.
YES. THIS IS A GOOD HOUSE, WITH GOOD PEOPLE.
I AM CONSISTENTLY AMAZED AT HOW QUICKLY MY STAFF ADAPTS TO CHANGE.

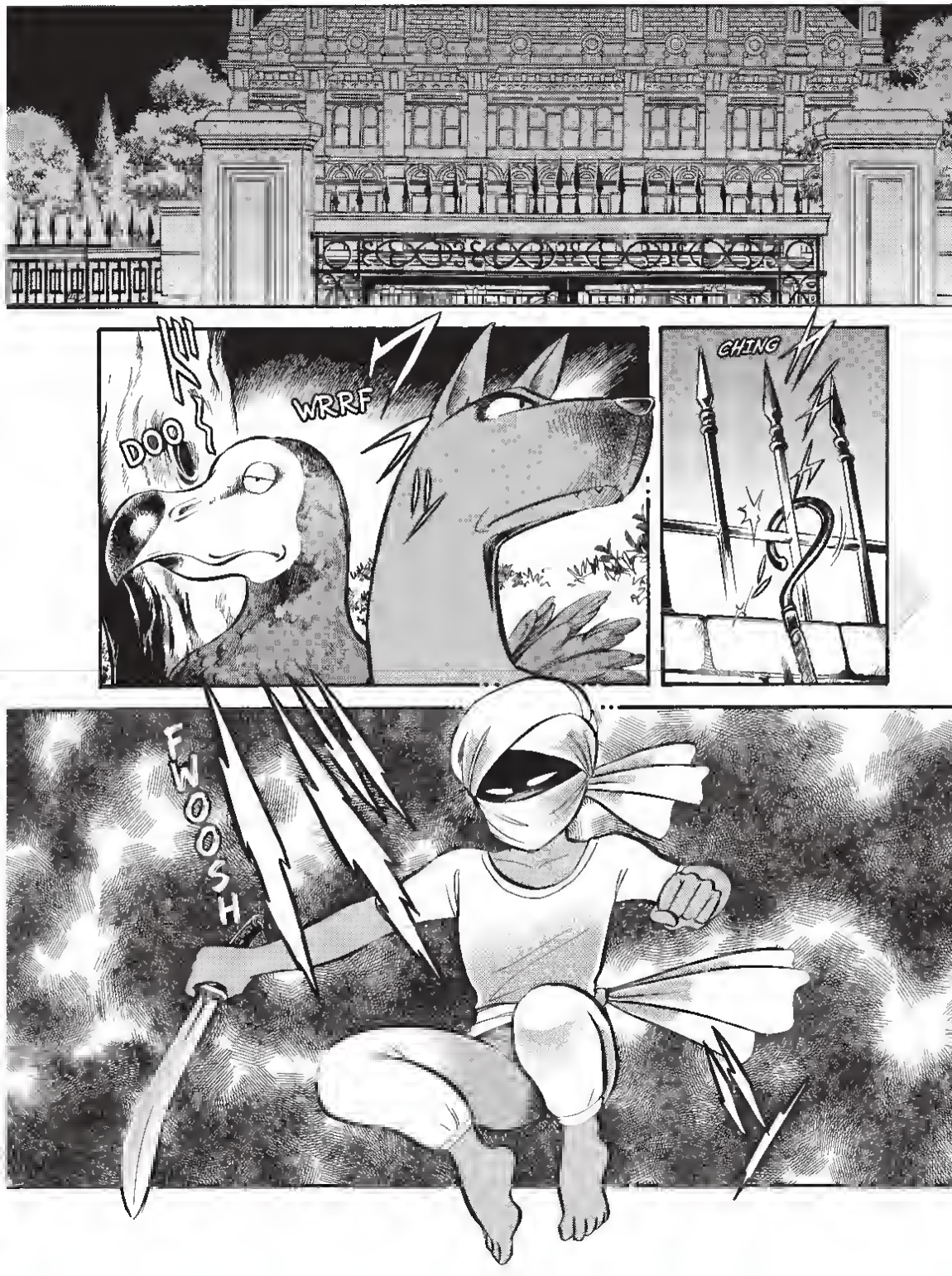
I DISLIKED LONDON WHEN I FIRST GOT HERE.
I THOUGHT IT WAS A COLD AND COLORLESS PLACE, ALL ROCK AND GLOOM.
BUT EVERYONE IN YOUR HOUSE IS SO WARM AND FRIENDLY.

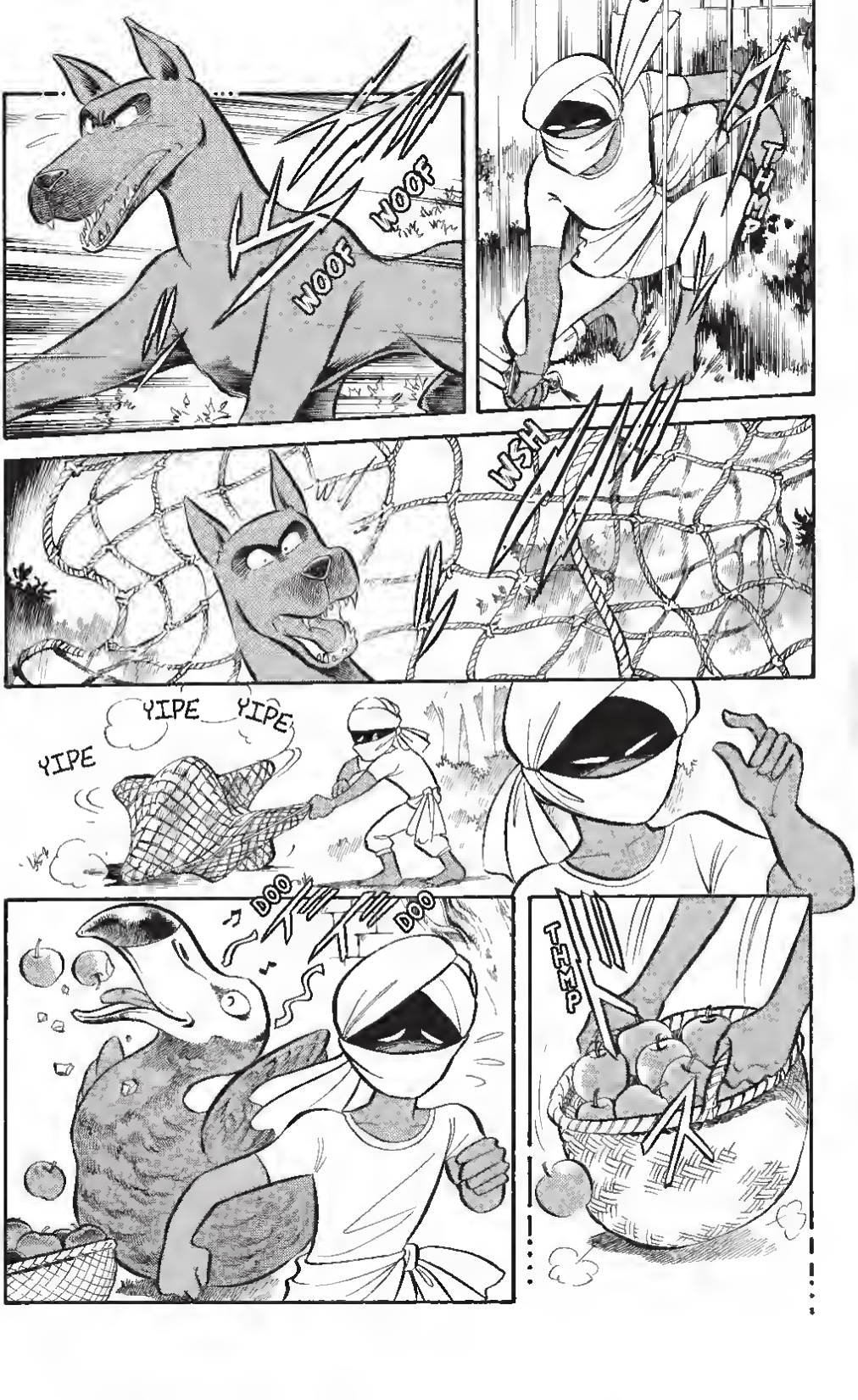

HEE HEE! REAL-LY?
WHY, THANK YOU!
I'M TERRIBLY FOND OF THIS PLACE.
I LOVE MY HOME, AND THE PEOPLE WITHIN IT, VERY MUCH.

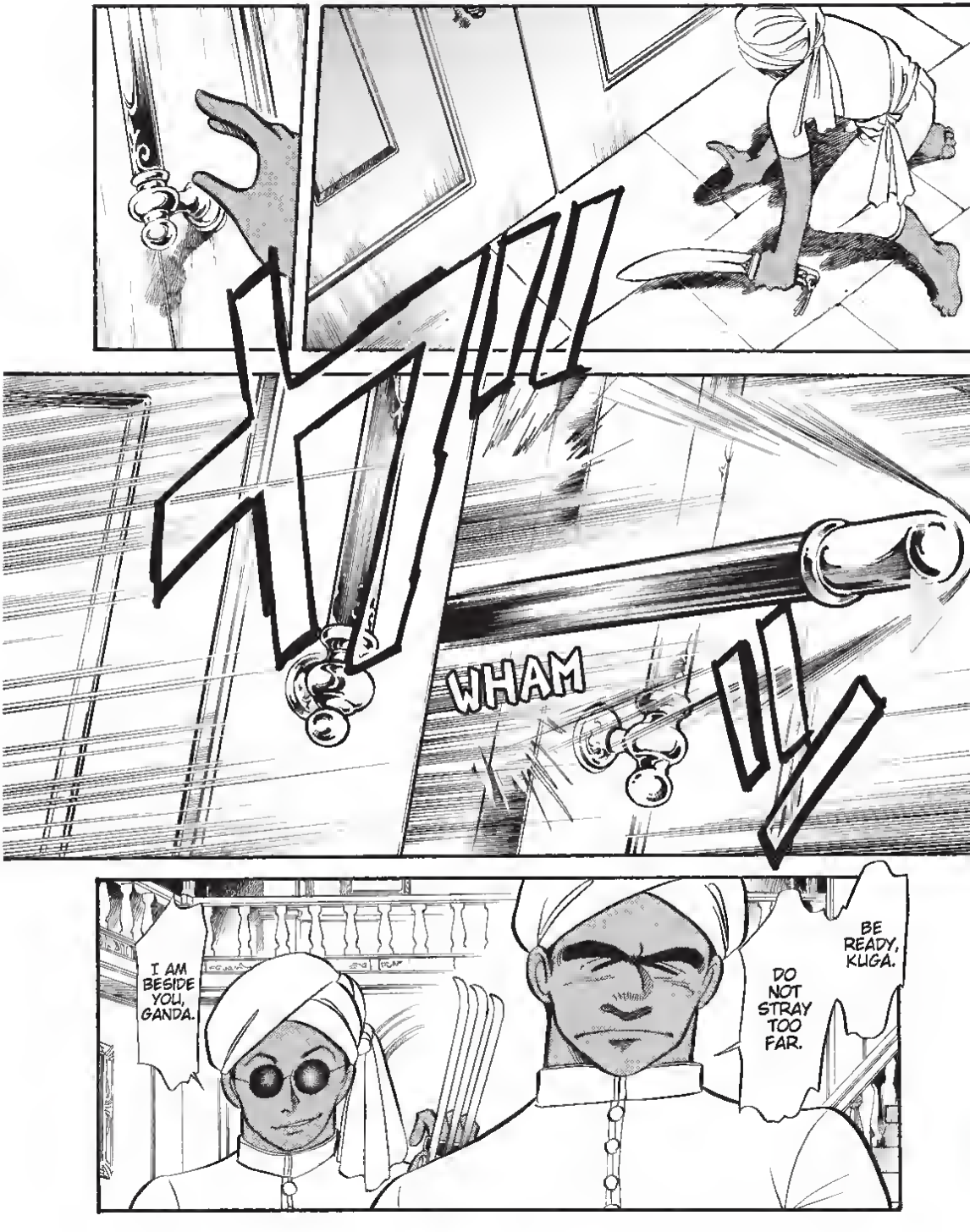
BUT I ALSO THINK IT WOULD BE *SPLENDID* TO BE ABLE TO SAIL ALL OVER THE WORLD, LIKE YOU DO, NADA.
OH! DO YOU THINK I COULD GO FOR A RIDE ON YOUR SHIP SOMEDAY?
OF COURSE! MIND YOU, IT IS A *PIRATE SHIP*, NOT A LUXURY YACHT.

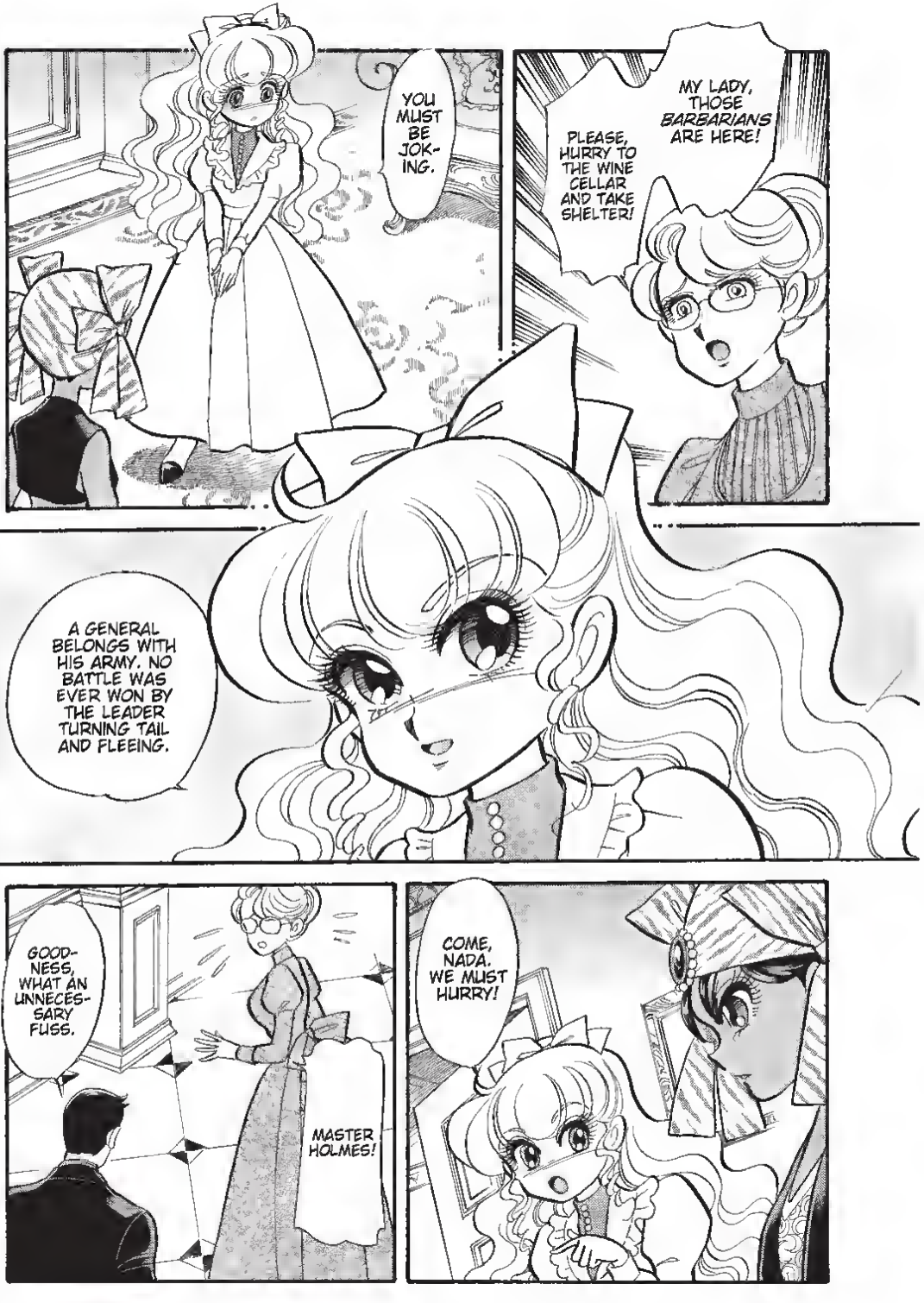
SHING

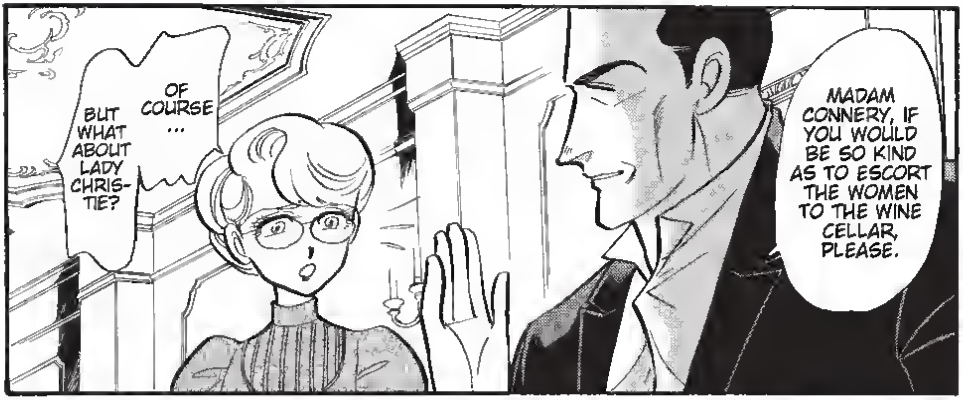
The Adventure of The Giant Rat of Sumatra (6)

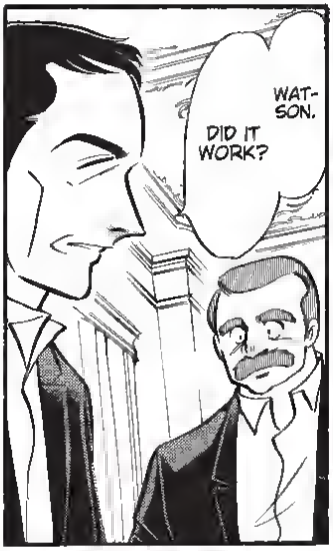

DOO
WRRF
CHING
FWOOSH

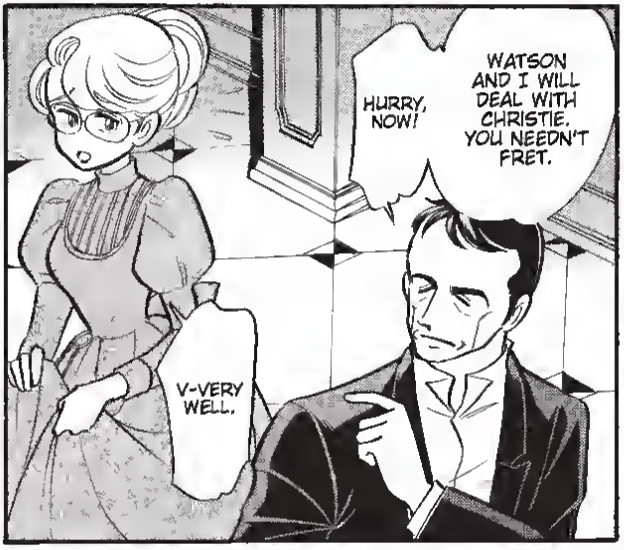

WOOF
WOOF
THUMP
WSH
YIPE
YIPE
YIPE
DOO
DOO
TWIRP

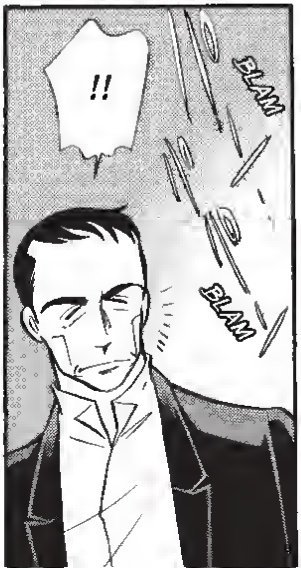

WHAM
BE READY, KUGA.
DO NOT STRAY TOO FAR.
I AM BESIDE YOU, GANDA.


YOU MUST BE JOK-ING.
MY LADY, THOSE BARBARIANS ARE HERE!
PLEASE, HURRY TO THE WINE CELLAR AND TAKE SHELTER!
A GENERAL BELONGS WITH HIS ARMY. NO BATTLE WAS EVER WON BY THE LEADER TURNING TAIL AND FLEEING.
GOOD-NESS, WHAT AN UNNECES-SARY FUSS.
MASTER HOLMES!
COME, NADA. WE MUST HURRY!


MADAM CONNERY, IF YOU WOULD BE SO KIND AS TO ESCORT THE WOMEN TO THE WINE CELLAR, PLEASE.
OF COURSE ...
BUT WHAT ABOUT LADY CHRIS-TIE?


WAT-SON.
DID IT WORK?


WATSON AND I WILL DEAL WITH CHRISTIE. YOU NEEDN'T FRET.
HURRY, NOW!
V-VERY WELL.


!!
SLAM
SLAM

IF IT APPEARS THEY HAVEN'T, WE WILL NEED TO SEND UP ANOTHER.
NOW WE MUST SIMPLY PRAY THEY SAW IT.
YES, I SENT IT UP WITH NO ISSUE.

BLAM
BLAM
BANG
UNGH!!
GYAH!
ZIIING
I THOUGHT YOU SAID NONE OF THEM USED THROWING WEAPONS.
SEEMS THEY LEARNED BETTER SINCE.

CHRIS-TIE!
GET DOWN! NOW!
SHIVA'S BREATH! THEY HAVE GUNS. THUGGEE NEVER USE GUNS!
WE COULD BE IN TROUBLE.
THIS MUST MEAN THEY ARE TOO DESPERATE TO BE PARTICULAR ABOUT HOW THEY FINISH THE JOB.
BLAM
BLAM

BANG
WELL THEN, WE CANNOT AFFORD TO BE PARTICULAR, EITHER!
QUITE A BLOW.
OOOH!
YES, BUT I DOUBT IT KILLED ANY OF THEM.
CHING
KRASH
ZING
SNAP

IT CAN'T BE HELPED. THAT IS SIMPLY THE WAY THIS GUN WAS DESIGNED.
WAIT, ONLY TWO SHOTS? THAT IS ALL?
W-WAIT! I HAVEN'T FINISHED RELOADING...!
THEY'RE COMING IN THROUGH THE WINDOWS!
GAH!
WHAM
SWISH

WHISH
WHISH
THWAK
CHING
WOOSH
THEY CHANGED DIRECTION MID-FLIGHT!
AMA-ZING!
YOU CAN PRAISE THEM WHEN WE'RE SAFE!
THIS WAY!
GURK!
THUK

PING
PING
CHAK
SAY, ANN-MARIE?
THAT DON'T LOOK LIKE YOUR USUAL GUNS.
MY PISTOLS WOULD TAKE FAR TOO LONG TO RELOAD DURING BATTLE, SO THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE ABANDONED AFTER ONLY ONE ROUND.
MOST IMPORTANTLY, THEY ARE EXTRA-ORDINARILY EASY TO RELOAD.
NO. DR. WATSON WAS KIND ENOUGH TO LEND THEM TO ME.
THE TRIGGER IS RATHER TOUGH, AND THEY HAVE A VERY STRONG RECOIL, BUT THEY ARE MUCH EASIER TO USE.

SO, YOU RECKON THE MISS WENT DOWN TO THE CELLAR WITH THE OTHERS?
MERCY... THAT JUST AIN'T NATURAL.
NUZZLE
NUZZLE
I GUESS I'M RUINED FOR MY OLD GUNS NOW.
OH, BUT NOT THESE DARLINGS... AREN'T THEY WONDERFUL?!
NEVER MIND.
TMP
TMP
NADA, QUICKLY! THIS WAY!!
FWOOSH
MY LADY ...?
What on earth is she doing there?

WHUD
ZIP
NORA, I WILL HOLD THEM HERE. YOU GO AND SEE TO LADY CHRISTIE!
RIGHT!
BLAM

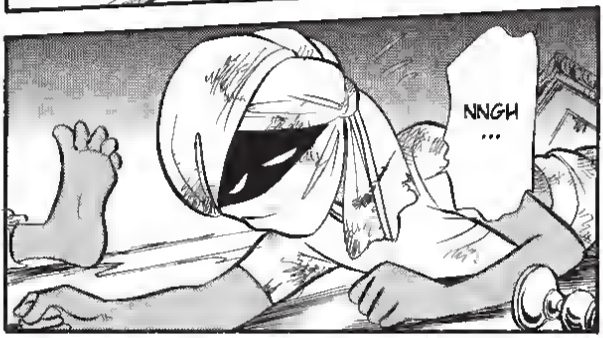
BLAST!
SPAK
ZING
SPAK
BLAM
BLAM

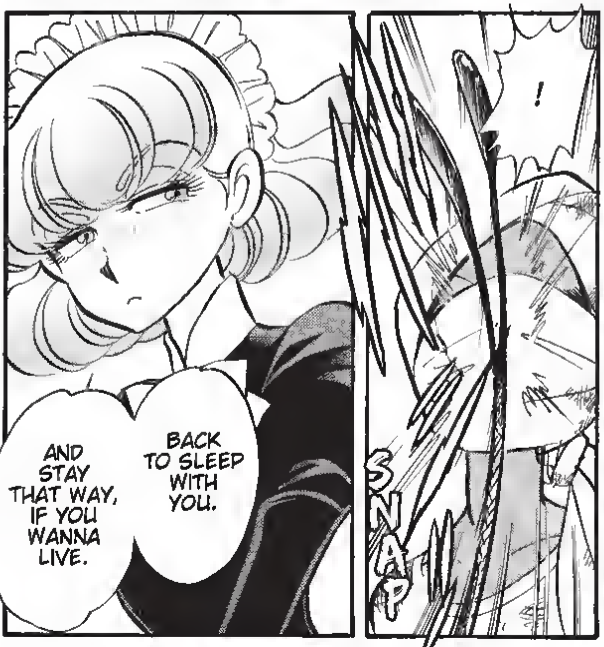
TMP
!!
FWIP
THUNK

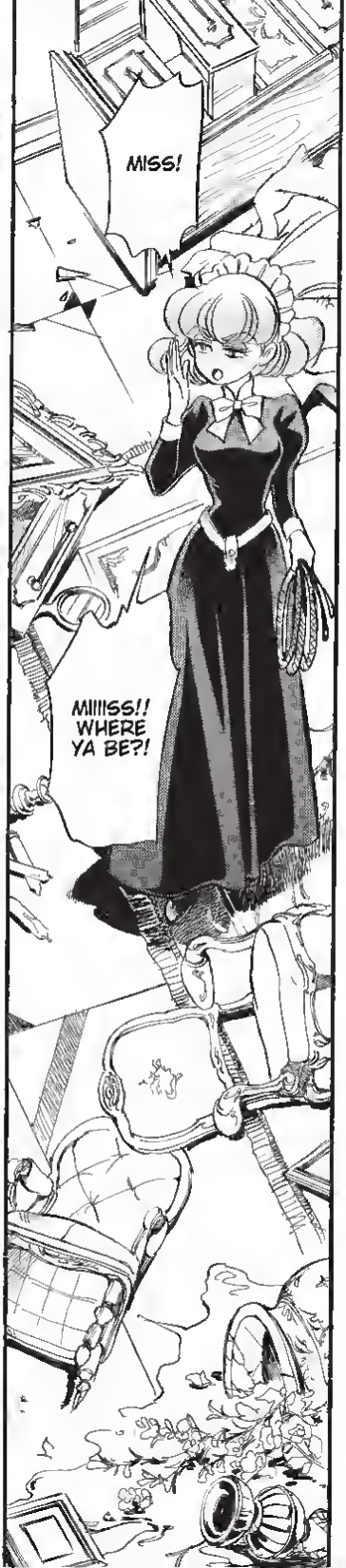
?
WHUMP
STAB
MR. BENSON IS ESCORTING THEM IN MY PLACE.
ANNMARIE?! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
MADAM CONNERY!
I THOUGHT YOU WENT WITH THE LADIES TO THE CELLAR.

SHOULD I SEND UP ANOTHER?
STILL NO SIGN OF SCOTLAND YARD?
HOLMES!
ONE CAN HOPE.
THE NEIGHBORS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE RUNG FOR THE POLICE, JUST OVER THE NOISE.
NO. THINGS HAVE TURNED INTO QUITE THE FRACAS HERE. THE YARD WILL KNOW SOON ENOUGH, EITHER WAY.
MADAM CONNERY AND MR. BENSON SHOULD BE THERE.
GO CHECK THE WINE CELLAR, WOULD YOU?
I CANNOT FIND CHRISTIE ANYWHERE.
BE THAT AS IT MAY, THIS MANSION IS CURSEDLY LARGE.
VERY WELL.
THOSE TWO MAY HAVE AN IDEA OF WHERE THE YOUNG MISS HAS VANISHED TO.

BLIMEY, IT'S HARD TO WALK THROUGH HERE.
THANK HEAVEN THERE AIN'T ANY OF OURS IN THIS MESS.


NNGH ...


!
SNAP
BACK TO SLEEP WITH YOU.
AND STAY THAT WAY, IF YOU WANNA LIVE.

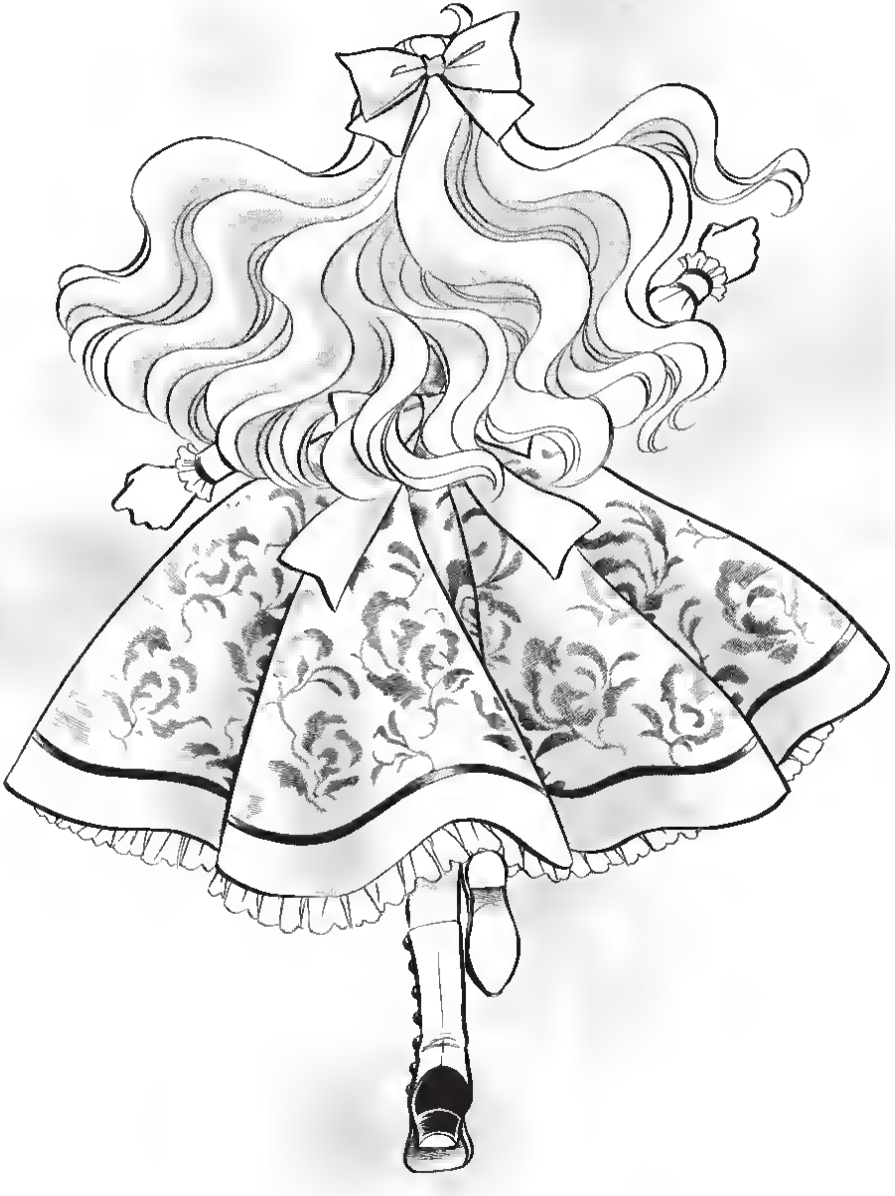

MISS!
MIIIISS!! WHERE YA BE?!

COR! CLEANIN' ALL THIS UP'LL BE A PROPER PAIN.
IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN A DAY OR TWO, NO QUESTION.
KRISH
!!
KRUNCH
SO, YOU'D CHALLENGE A POOR, WEE BIT OF A GIRL?
WELL, WHAT A BRAVE MAN.

GRAAAAH!!
WHOOSH
SWISH
SNAP
AAH?!

YANK
HAH!
NOW TO TWIST THAT TREE BRANCH NECK O' YOURS!!
SNAP
LAWKS! IT CAN'T BE! THIS WHIP HAS STEEL STRANDS IN IT--!

The Adventure of The Giant Rat of Sumatra (7)



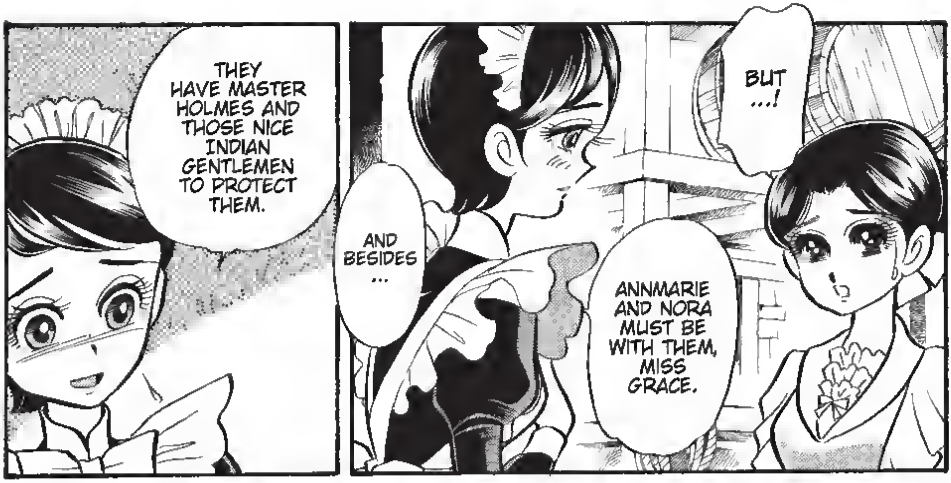
MY ...
MY WHIP ...!
NOT GOOD!
PLOP
SHF
キラリ
GLEAM

THEP
WOOSH
WELL, THINGS JUST GOT A MITE HAIRIER...
.....
TWIST
SHF

AAAAAAH
POP
SWOOSH
JANGLE
WSH
YANK

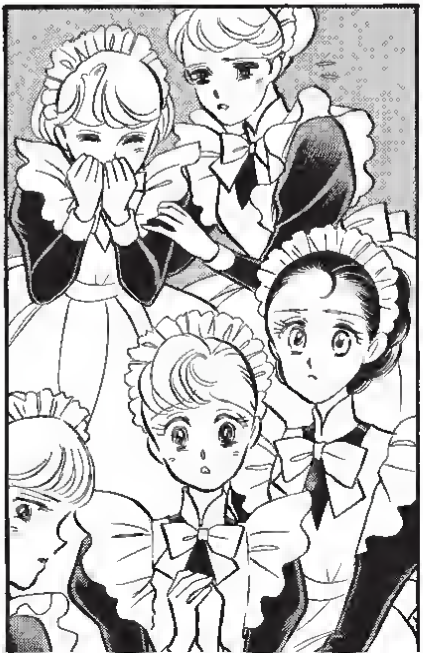
GLEAM
THWAK
GAH!
NOT HALF BAD, MISTER. AIN'T MANY CAN MAKE ME PULL OUT MY ACE IN THE HOLE.
THUD

LADY CHRIS-TIE!
MADAM CON-NERY!!
OH NO!
NEITHER OF THEM ARE HERE ...!
MISS GRACE, YOU MUSTN'T! MR. BENSON SAID WE ARE NOT TO OPEN THIS DOOR UNTIL WE RECEIVE THE SIGNAL.
PLEASE OPEN THE DOOR. I MUST GO FIND THEM.

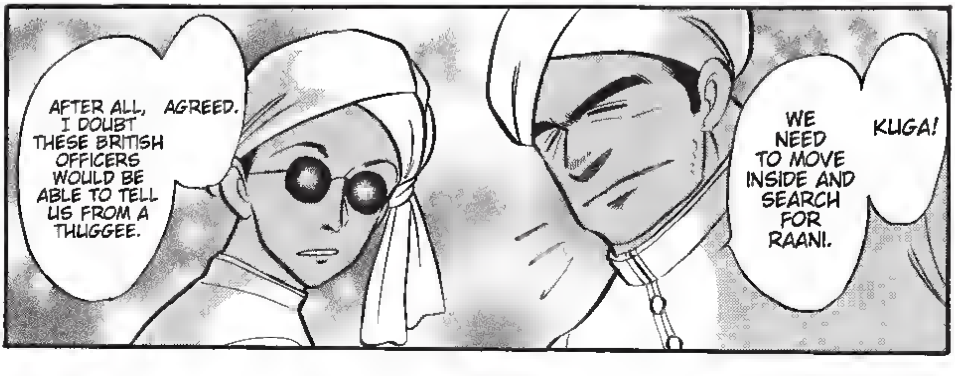

THEY HAVE MASTER HOLMES AND THOSE NICE INDIAN GENTLEMEN TO PROTECT THEM.
AND BESIDES ...
BUT ...!
ANNMARIE AND NORA MUST BE WITH THEM, MISS GRACE.

EMILY ...
I MUST AGREE, MISS GRACE. NONE OF US ARE OF ANY USE IN A FIGHT. WE WOULD JUST BE IN THE WAY.

BUT LORD ABOVE, I AM WORRIED ABOUT LADY CHRISTIE ...!
SHE'S RIGHT. I CANNOT ALLOW THESE GIRLS TO BE PUT INTO ANY DANGER.



CLOP
CLOP
FWEE-FWEE-FWEEEE
CLOP
WAAAAH
WAAAAH


AFTER ALL, I DOUBT THESE BRITISH OFFICERS WOULD BE ABLE TO TELL US FROM A THUGGEE.
AGREED.
WE NEED TO MOVE INSIDE AND SEARCH FOR RAANI.
KUGA!

GOOD!
SCOTLAND YARD HAS ARRIVED!
EXCEL-LENT!
THESE "SCOTLAND YARD" MEN LOOK TO HAVE THE SITUATION IN HAND.
IT MUST HAVE BEEN A SIGNAL FOR THEM TO COME.
NOW I KNOW WHY DR. WATSON SHOT OFF THAT ODD FIREWORK EARLIER.
I AM AFRAID THAT IS NOT THE BEST IDEA--
!!
ARE YOU SAYING YOU INTEND TO KILL THEM? WHY NOT LET THEM RUN?
!
GANDA, KLIGA, AND I WILL TAKE CARE OF THE REST.
THEY WILL NOT CATCH ALL OF THE THUGGEE, THOUGH.

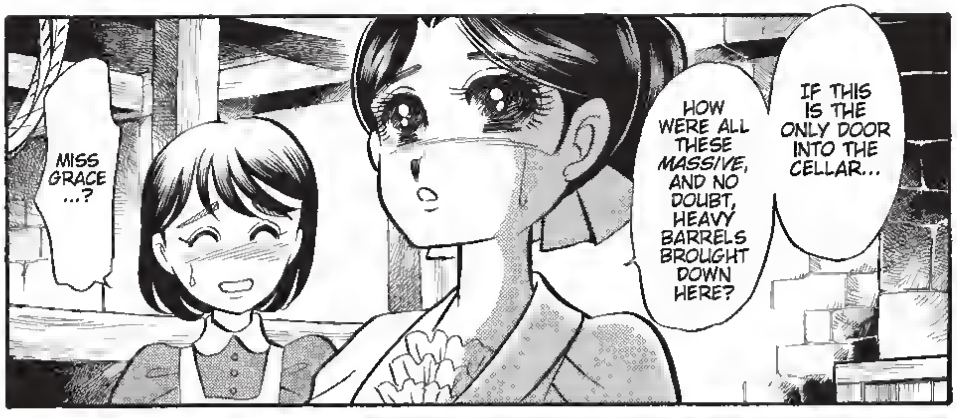
DO YOU SMELL SOMETHING BURNING?
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...
OH NO!
THEY MUST HAVE SET FIRE TO THE HOUSE!
SNIFF
KRAKK
OH MY GOODNESS, YOU'RE RIGHT! I SAW A FLICKER!!
HURRY!
WE HAVE TO GET DOWN FROM HERE!
KALI CONDEMN THEIR SOULS! THEY KNEW THEY WERE LOSING, SO THEY DECIDED TO BURN THE WHOLE PLACE DOWN AROUND US!!

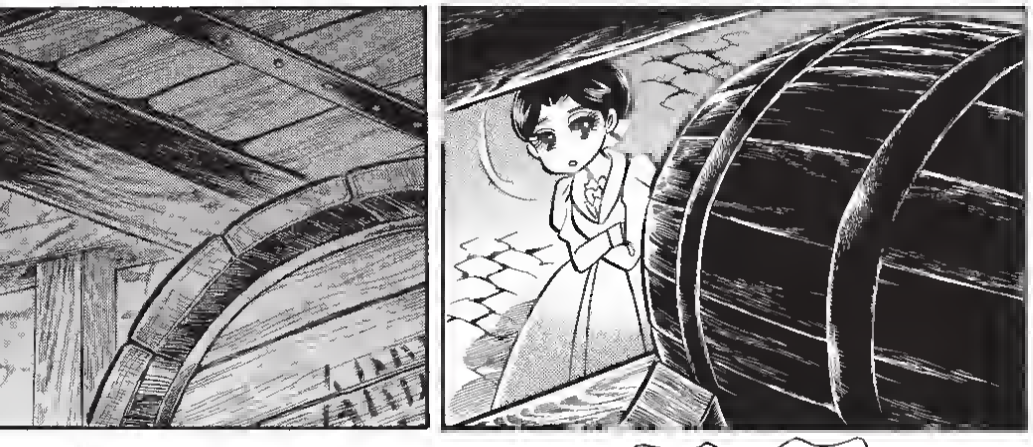
ANN-MARIE! WHERE'S THE MISS?!
NORA !!
MISS! MISS, WHERE ARE YE?!
BUSTLE BUSTLE
GOD HELP US, I CANNOT FIND HER ANYWHERE!
I DON'T KNOW!
THERE'S NO GETTING NEAR THE CELLAR DOOR NOW!
NO IDEA! THOSE BARBARIANS SPREAD OIL EVERYWHERE AND SET IT ALIGHT!
AHA! THERE GO THE FOOTMEN!
YOU LOT! IS THE MISS DOWN IN THE CELLAR?!

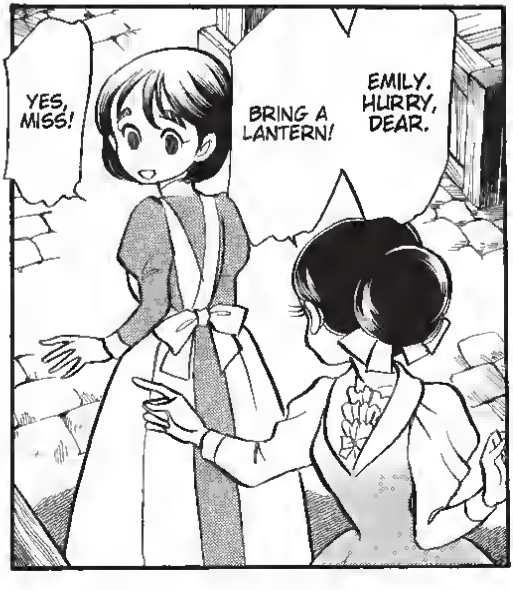
YES. WE WILL HAVE TO HURRY.
CRIMINY! MISS GRACE AND THE OTHERS ARE STILL DOWN THERE!
INSPEC-TOR.
EVERY-BODY ELSE, NAB ANYTHING IN A TURBAN!
SOME-BODY CALL THE FIRE PATROL!
THE THUGGEE HAVE SET THE ENTIRE MANSION ABLAZE AND THEN RAN OFF.
YES, I SAW THE FLAMES. THINGS ARE GETTING UGLY OUT HERE.
WHERE IS THE LADY OF THE HOUSE?
MR. HOLMES!
I CANNOT SAY. SHE IS MISSING.

WHAT...? SMOKE!
OH NO! THERE MUST BE A FIRE!
EEEK!!
WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE!
NO, NO! LADIES, PLEASE CALM DOWN!
EVERY-ONE, RUN! WE HAVE TO ESCAPE!!
FWOOOSH

EEEEK !!
NOOO! I DON'T WANT TO DIE!
IT'S A SEA OF FLAME OUT THERE...!
GOD HELP US, WE'RE TRAPPED!!
SLAM
MISS GRACE?
I EXPECT THEY ARE EMPTY NOW, THOUGH.
YES, THEY ARE WINE BARRELS.
THOSE BARRELS OVER THERE ARE FRIGHT-FULLY LARGE.


MISS GRACE ...?
HOW WERE ALL THESE MASSIVE, AND NO DOUBT, HEAVY BARRELS BROUGHT DOWN HERE?
IF THIS IS THE ONLY DOOR INTO THE CELLAR...



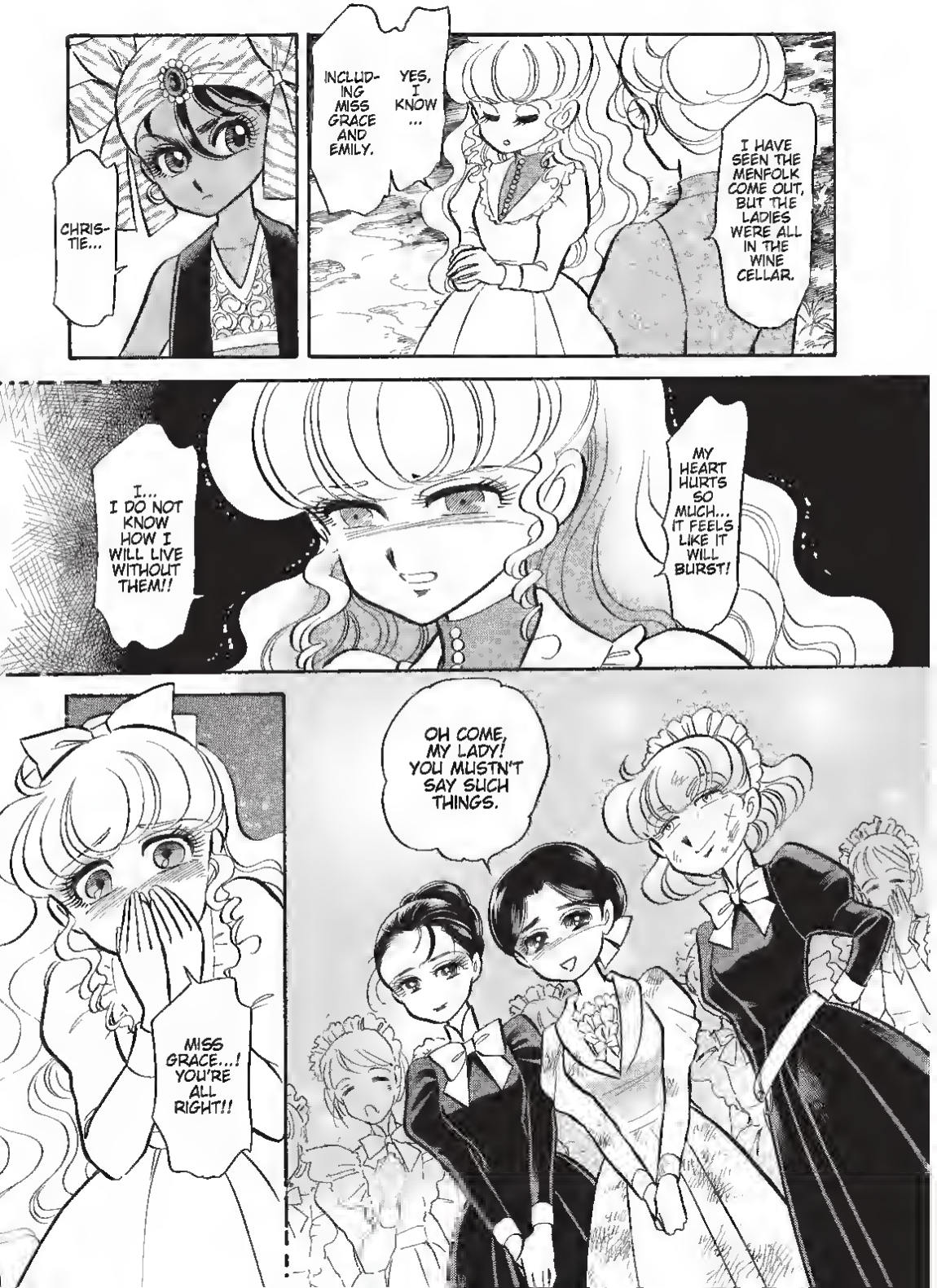

YES, MISS!
BRING A LANTERN!
EMILY. HURRY, DEAR.

THEY MUST HAVE USED A LIFT TO LOWER THE BARRELS DIRECTLY INTO THE CELLAR.
AHA! I SEE A TRAP DOOR!
THIS TRAP DOOR SHALL BE OUR ESCAPE ROUTE!

FWOOOO
TRRK

RMM RMM RMM RMM
ドドド

KRAKL
FWOOOO
KRAKL
LADY CHRIS-TIE!
LADY CHRISTIE !!
OH, LET ME GO!
I MUST FIND HER!!
My lady!!
YOU ARE UNHARMED, I HOPE?
I'M RIGHT HERE, MADAM CONNERY. YOU NEEDN'T SHOUT SO.
SO IT SEEMS THE THUGGEE SET THIS FIRE, AND ESCAPED.
BUT THAT ISN'T IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW. WE NEED TO BE CERTAIN EVERYONE MADE IT OUT SAFELY. HURRY!

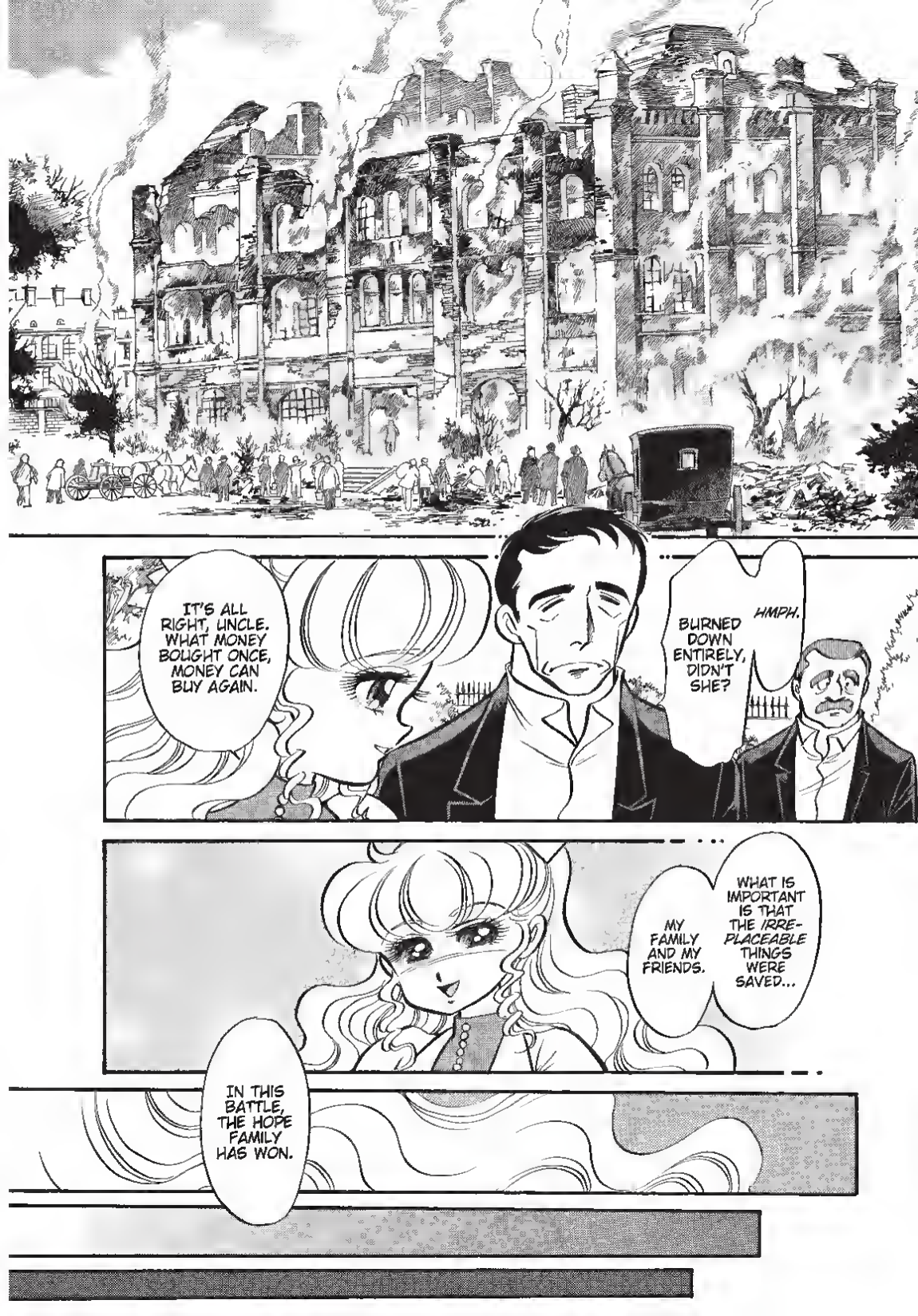

CHRIS-TIE...
YES, I KNOW ...
INCLUD-ING MISS GRACE AND EMILY.
I HAVE SEEN THE MENFOLK COME OUT, BUT THE LADIES WERE ALL IN THE WINE CELLAR.
I... I DO NOT KNOW HOW I WILL LIVE WITHOUT THEM!!
MY HEART HURTS SO MUCH... IT FEELS LIKE IT WILL BURST!
MISS GRACE...! YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!!
OH COME, MY LADY! YOU MUSTN'T SAY SUCH THINGS.

BUT THAT IS WHEN NORA AND ANNMARIE CAME TO HELP.
AT FIRST, NO MATTER HOW HARD WE PUSHED, WE COULD NOT OPEN IT.
HOW-EVER, WE FOUND THE TRAP DOOR USED TO BRING IN THE WINE BARRELS.
WE WERE QUITE WORRIED WHEN SMOKE STARTED POURING IN UNDER THE DOOR.
BUT THAT WHOLE AREA WAS BURNING MERRILY AWAY. WE COULDN'T EVEN GET CLOSE.
AYE. WE TRIED FOR THE CELLAR DOOR OUTSIDE THE KITCHEN FIRST.
SO WE RAN OVER AND USED THE PULLEY TO PRY THE DOOR OPEN.
THEN ANNMARIE SAID WE SHOULD TRY THE TRAP DOOR OUT BACK, WHERE THEY USED TO DROP THE BARRELS IN.

WHEN THE DOOR FINALLY CAME UP, SMOKE WAS POSITIVELY BOILING OUT...
FOR A MOMENT, I WAS CERTAIN WE WERE TOO LATE. I THINK I NEARLY WENT MAD WITH GRIEF.
OH, THANK GOD! YOU'RE UNHARMED!
I WAS TERRIFIED THAT SOMETHING MIGHT'VE HAPPENED TO YOU!
かはっ
HUG
EEP!
!
LOOKS LIKE WE GOT ANOTHER FIRE ON OUR HANDS!
CRI-MINY!

DOOO
I AM JUST HAPPY THAT WE HAVE ALL ESCAPED BEING ROASTED, EVEN NELSON AND DODO.
NORA, PLEASE! YOU MUSTN'T SAY SUCH THINGS.
MIND, THE BEST WAY FOR THAT BLOKE TO MAKE ANNMARIE HAPPY WOULD BE TO STAND STILL WHILE SHE SHOT HIM.
WHAT? YOU'RE LEAVING ALREADY?
WELL, THEN! THE THREE OF US WILL BE ON OUR WAY. VISHNU'S BLESSINGS BE ON YOU, CHRISTIE.
WHAT, "NEVER COME BACK" ?!
BUT LONDON TURNED OUT TO BE A BETTER PLACE THAN I THOUGHT.
NONE-THELESS, I APPRECIATE THE THOUGHT. I DOUBT I'LL EVER COME BACK HERE...
WELL, IT IS STILL BURNING, MISS.
I WAS VERY MUCH LOOKING FORWARD TO GIVING YOU A TOUR OF LONDON.
BUT WE ARE FINALLY SAFE!

YOU CANNOT MEAN THAT, NADA. DO YOU WANT TO LIVE OUT YOUR LIFE AS NOTHING MORE THAN THE "LITTLE RAT" OF SUMATRA, DANCING TO AN ENGLISHMAN'S WHIMS?
OUR COUNTRIES ARE ENEMIES, AND IF YOU WISH TO DEFEAT YOUR ENEMY...
YOU MUST FIRST KNOW HIM! THERE-FORE, YOU *MUST* RETURN TO STUDY OUR ENGLISH WAYS.
CHRIS-TIE...
DON'T STAY AWAY LONG NOW.
I WILL BE WAITING TO WELCOME YOU WHEN YOU COME BACK.
VERY WELL ...
WE WILL.


BURNED DOWN ENTIRELY, DIDN'T SHE?
HMPH.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, UNCLE. WHAT MONEY BOUGHT ONCE, MONEY CAN BUY AGAIN.
WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT THE IRREPLACEABLE THINGS WERE SAVED...
MY FAMILY AND MY FRIENDS.
IN THIS BATTLE, THE HOPE FAMILY HAS WON.

CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
DASH
COME ON, EVERY-ONE!
HURRY, NOW! HURRY!!
LOOK!
THEIR SHIP HAS ALREADY DOCKED!
IT'S BEEN FIVE YEARS SINCE YOU LAST SAW 'EM, MISS.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GONNA SAY?
OH, THAT IS EASY!

Young Miss Holmes / Fin